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# The Review of Metaphysics

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# The Review of Metaphysics

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# THE REVIEW OF METAPHYSICS

A Philosophical Quarterly

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## THE CRITERION OF REALITY

### 1. THE FACT OF EFFORT.

"Action as such is no object of contemplation" writes H. F. Hallet in a paper which has much in common with the account here to be given. (*Philosophy*, Vol. 20, No. 77, Nov. 1945, "The Essential Nature of Knowledge", p. 237). That is why effort — all effort is action to some degree — can scarcely be described. It has no color, no length, breadth, volume, no sound, no fixed residence in space. It is no movement of a body from one place to another. It has degree to be sure, but degree of what? Of muscular strain. But that isn't effort. And even if it were, it isn't present in the effort of attention, say, to a mathematical problem, or the effort to calm the angry passions and heed the counsels of reason; still less in the effort to relax a muscle when in pain. Effort is common to all these, and is certainly not proportional to muscular tension in the last; rather is it the reverse. True, the "behavior" psychologist might show a high correlation between the relaxing of a muscle and increased blood-supply to the brain or other gland, or some other increase of physiological functioning. But that isn't effort either. An effort we consciously put forth involves a notion of the end we strive for, something we want; to have the car

move, to raise the stone, to see the problem's answer, to behave reasonably, to be quiet. Always effort is purposive, always it has some idea, however dim or ambiguous, of what it desires. This foresight passes to something beyond the present event, something not present in that event. It is the prerogative of mind, as found also in memory which reaches beyond the present event. Mind alone rises above the line that marks off the present from the past and the future; mind is in a different dimension from body. Mind crosses the line without crossing it. What is a paradox for physical things is solved in mental life. So then with effort, want, desire. These are no more describable in physical terms, in terms of muscular strain or glandular activity, than is the third dimension describable in terms of the second. But if their mentality forbids their being described in physical terms, their *originality* forbids their being described in such mental terms as sense-data or thoughts. Originality — what does that mean? It means that effort or desire is not a content or object, save in a well-nigh vanishing way, but the producing of one, the origination thereof. Try to raise your arm, and you start going the sense-datum of muscular strain. Try to attend to the solution of the cubic equation, and you initiate thoughts of  $x^2$ ,  $y^2$ ,  $x^2 + y^2$ , and so on. Of course the contemplative philosopher<sup>1</sup> here interposes "trying is nothing but the thought of having something before the mind, and this leads of itself to the so-called act — there isn't any unique thing involved, such as what you call effort." Thus we read "The thought of attending draws the attention in its wake; there is no abrupt and inexplicable bolt from the blue which arbitrarily lights up one thing rather than another" (B. Blanshard, *The Nature of Thought*, Vol. I, p. 401). Now to be sure, this does sometimes happen. I think of reading a certain detective story, and as the book lies handy and nothing intervenes, I read it and without any noticeable effort. But such ideo-motor action isn't all; not always does life run so smoothly. All too often we have difficult tasks, we have to hold hard our attention. And note the pith of the objection just quoted : it is

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<sup>1</sup> By "contemplative philosophers" I mean those philosophers (like F. H. Bradley) who deny the existence, or at least the uniqueness of effort.



expressed in the disparaging words "abrupt and inexplicable bolt from the blue" and "arbitrarily." The objection draws its force from the postulate that everything must have a rational ground. (Blanshard's book is the fullest and ablest defence of this view yet written). But a self-originating effort of course has no ground. It is spontaneous, just there, and verifiably so, as every man knows when he works. The contemplative thinkers are not looking for given facts in this instance, but are ruled by a theory or perhaps a faith. And where the describable content of the effort-experience is so minute, so near to nothing, it is all too easy to convince themselves that it isn't there. Even so, they might see it if their insistence upon articulate intelligible description didn't obstruct their view. Presumably that is why modern masters of analysis in the British manner do not seriously consider the effort-resistance experience in their theories about external reality. Spencer and Bain, among others, had taken it as criterion, but judged by present standards they were rather naive empiricists and their view has today almost if not wholly disappeared below the British horizon. Perhaps the German Max Scheler would be more respected; the view has been attributed to him by Julius Kraft who writes that for Scheler "Reality is originally no object of knowing, but of *Leiden*, the experience of resistance" (*Von Husserl zu Heidegger*, Zurich and Leipzig, 1932, p. 64). But in any case, our consummate analysts of today *do* really believe in effort, just as they really believe in the external world. They are "perfectly certain" as Price said of their belief in that world, that the "thought of attending" is sometimes harder to hold, sometimes easier, and they know they *try* to hold that thought in their minds. The trying is not the mere presence of the thought of trying — how think of trying if we have never tried? — but is putting that thought into operation. Indeed, there is no greater gulf in human experience than this between the idea of doing something and doing it. Hell is paved with good intentions; the distance from hell to heaven — going either way — is precisely the distance between thought alone and action added. The sweet and noble resolve, the idea of the good on the one hand, on the other the failure to act on it at the crucial moment — that is the root-tragedy of man, and a tragedy for which he

alone is to blame. The purely contemplative philosopher, if consistent, would lose all sense of sin.

Effort is then well-nigh indescribable. Not wholly so, else it would be meaningless. Description is a matter of degree : who can fully describe red or wet ? To be sure, description comes down in the end to the *pointing* to certain given qualities or relations or events which are just there. All connotation rests on denotation, though it may be something more. But the unique positive thing about effort is its originality; to which indeed we can point, since every one experiences it in himself. Yet common to all men though it is, it is so intangible ! more spirit than body, more force than substance. We should perhaps best call it not a datum but a factum, or better still, a fiat, a doing rather than a deed, yet not merely a becoming, for we see things coming to be, we *hear* a melody progressing and *touch* a moving object. Effort, dynamic as it is, is not just the process, rather it is — we must re-iterate — the start, the initiative of the process. Nor is the experience of it properly called mystical. Even if mystical experience were indescribable, as has been wrongly alleged, these would be two quite different indescribables, the one receptive, the other originitive. All we can say perhaps is that effort is analogous to the push that starts the ball rolling, not the motion of the ball, not the acceleration, but the enforcement of these. Its witness does not lie in its value as explanation of the motion; the witness is direct, the immediate experience which every man has. It seems to be no object of scientific investigation in the technical sense. It cannot be measured by itself, as acceleration and motion are measured. That is why physics has abandoned the old notion of force, the physical analogue of effort, replacing it by mass-acceleration. That is why the rationalists in modern philosophy look askance at this direct experience of man, so intangible that we can draw from it no logical implications. For it has no structure. Its characteristic is not clearness nor distinctness. We might be tempted to say it is like a point in space, too small to be envisaged, yet not a zero; but it is more like a dot or spark, so small as to be just seen, so small as to have no visible spread, no content that we can analyze to draw out rational conse-

quences connecting it with other things. Here too we see why the contemplative thinker seldom believes in free choice, which the natural man naturally accepts. Free choice is the kind of thing that might well belong to this experience; free choice is origination. Not necessarily that *all* effort is freely made. The baby exercises no free choice when he sucks hard at the nipple, nor the adult when he wrestles for his life with an enemy. But they want, need, desire; that is the point. Desire — that is the essence of effort. Desire has the originaive quality; it comes as it were out of one's self and from no other source, it is what *we* want, our self insisting on its own. But the business is so deep within that it is easily overlooked, or deliberately excluded from the gaze, and without a qualm. We might say it is too near to be noticed, or too deep down to obtrude itself, as the water in the well is easy to see, but not the spring at the bottom of the well. Effort disappears from the scene when the thinker is calmly gazing; but when he acts it is felt, and strongly felt. It is in fact the very essence of the self, the well-spring of its worth and its growth. A man is what he does. His worth lies in what he makes. All that he is responsible for, all that he earns, is credited with, or guilty of, comes from this innermost source. So thinks the practical man, so we all believe when we are conducting our lives in intercourse with one another and with nature. But for the contemplative attitude there is here too little of clear articulation, of object-matter for analysis; no use can be made of it in a deductive system. So the system-builders discard it.

But all this is rather negative, too negative to give a clue to the notion of an external world. The positive trait which does that must now be brought out. And as follows.

From the above it might seem that the closeness and intimacy of effort are what make it so opaque to description. No doubt they do help to obscure it. But that isn't the whole of the matter. We are self-conscious beings, aren't we? We can introspect our own pains, fears, joys, images, reasonings. True, they are private (pace the "naturalists" whose unnatural view we shall later take up) and inaccessible to other men except by inference; but we are sure enough of their happening, though perhaps they are too near for the mental eye to

focus as readily as we might wish. The body's eye sees best when the object is a short distance away, so we might expect the like of the mental eye, self-conscious introspection. But after all is that proper? Is the mind so analogous to the body? Cannot a highly trained introspective psychologist envisage his own mental states correctly? Certainly mind is *not* wholly analogous to body. Surely self-consciousness is a higher dimension of being than the physical: a body cannot embody its own body, but a mind may be mindful of its own mindfulness. And a higher dimension has its own laws, not present in the lower. There is then no sufficient reason why mere closeness, intimacy, or privacy should make the effort-experience so difficult to envisage. It may be small in content, but its intensity is often great enough to make up for that. There must be something else to account for the elusiveness. There is.

## 2. EFFORT OUTGOING.

Effort is, so to say, outward bound. It has an end in view. The professor tries to *lift the book* — the raised book is the end. The pilot tries to put the wheel hard over — the wheel hard over is the end. Effort works toward an end which is *other than* the effort itself. And in proportion as the effort is intense, is it concentrated on its end: that is, has nothing else in view but that end. It is aware of the object alone. There is no room for introspection, except the minimum of awareness *that* one is striving. That is why effort eludes introspection, clear analysis, articulation. That is why it occupies so tiny a space in the area of mind. Not so much the nearness, though it is near, nearer than hands and feet, but the transitivity, is the sufficient reason. And it is this transitivity, a positive and well-verified experience in each man's life, through which will be found the clue to the external world.

Let us dwell on the point, careless of repetition.

The dynamic or transitive character of effort, the *outgoingness* of it, we are now to see, is what gives to this function its incalculable import for human life. By it the most private and hidden thing we know, the least open to intelligent description — we know *that* it is, but scarcely *what* it is —

this almost vanishing pulse of being, is borne out into open world, and even transforms that world. Effort tills the ground, tunnels the mountain, blasts the cliff. So the tiny seed, buried in the dark soil, becomes the mighty tree. How then? Effort always does something, however misdirected; it is a movement, even when the change is from moving to relaxed muscles. Conscious effort moves away from its own being to the being of the end — self-consciousness passes out, turns at once into consciousness of that end. When I am slipping down the bank toward the deeps of the lake below, I cast about frantically for a handhold. I don't introspect, I don't say to myself "ah! here is a genuine experience of effort — analyze it!" My consciousness is filled with the object — the slippery slope, the lake, the needed holdfast. So, to greater or less degree, with all effort. I put on my coat, open the door, walk out: these demand little exertion, I am scarcely aware of each separate object — the coat, the door, the steps to take. But let the door stick and I strain to move it, I begin to focus on the purpose to open it. I might try to analyze the experience of effort when it is slight, for the object does not then obtrude itself — but then there is too little effort, as it were, to be examined. Yet when there is more, the object claims more attention and the sense of effort becomes more of a *that* than a *what* — we feel its presence, and intensely, but it is just the struggle toward the object — its own character evanesces into the end sought — the object is all there is to describe, *almost*. So the effort hides its head and we cannot discern its features; it only points to the end in view and the conflict between what is and what is desired. You see only the tip of the pointing finger. How different from the experience of a colour, sound, smell, shape, where you see the whole body of the datum. It is poles apart from cognition, from contemplative awareness of objects. Such awareness is calm possession, still beholding without transition. It sits and gazes at things, it may analyze and reflect upon them, with no compelling drive away to some other object — as one contemplates a landscape to see its detail and feels no urge to pass on. It is self-contained, the enjoyment of knowledge for its own sake. Its motto is "Oh moment stay, thou art so fair." So the contemplation of an object



even permits introspection on the contemplating itself : we go inward from the colour to the sensation of it — which is why some have said that consciousness implies self-consciousness. So too we may attend to the effort of attention itself. Yet, so doing, we find that about all we detect is the clearing up of the object of attention. We look attentively at the forest and at our looking, and note the trees getting more distinct, more definitely located, and the like. We find little or nothing to say of attention itself — it just vanishes unless it has some noticeable degree of active exertion, some *effort* to attend. For it is our *intent* rather than a *content*. Which again is why the contemplative philosopher argues that there is *no* activity of attention, but simply the clearing up of the object. So this native effort, most intimate and private of all our experiences, slips out of our grasp, pushes our gaze on to the object, relays into the object. The effort of attention eludes attention, as a drop of mercury slips from under the finger. When mind contemplates in stillness, attention is barely verifiable; when mind makes effort to attend, attention is more verifiable, yet verifiable not as just itself, but as passing out into the object. Most modest of mind's functions this effort of attention would seem to be. Yet equally modest are all other efforts : they too obliterate themselves in favor of what is to come. But also they are the most deserving, for by them we accomplish all that we ever accomplish of ourselves. Effort is the one power that we ourselves originate, the one power that is solely our own, not due to the physical potencies in the matter of our bodies, not even wholly due to the native likes and dislikes we inherit, or the instinctive tendencies of our behavior. And doubtless the greatest of its accomplishments is this — it enables our cognitive faculty to entertain the idea of an external world — an idea which that faculty would never have conceived by itself; as we are now to see.

The effort-experience then lets us see just enough of itself to discern the gesture it makes toward its end or object. And the gesture is imperious; it does more than point, it pushes us onward to the object. But now this object is twofold : the end sought, and the present fact that now excludes it. Without the latter, effort would not be effort; it goes always toward

change of the present given fact. Even the effort of attention would change our present knowledge into a fuller knowledge. Now from the co-operation of these two, the effort and what opposes it, arises the notion and at the same time the assurance of the real external world. Not that the two factors justify an *inference* to that world. They give it directly, so that we can have no doubts on the matter.

Look again at the effort-experience. I struggle hard to swim against the current sweeping me away from shore. For what do I struggle? At each stroke, to get nearer the shore. I don't think of the shore so much as of the next stroke. The immediate end in view need not be the distant end of standing on the beach. It may be as close as you please; for this second the next second's stroke, the next successor of the present moment. But no matter how close, it is *other than* the present moment and the contents of this moment. The notion of "other than" has entered. Even so, too, with mere sensory attention. I strain my ear to understand the speech of a foreigner or to identify the call of a bird. The speech understood, the bird identified — these may come ever so quickly, but they are beyond the effort. Thus in every effort we make, there is a sense of something other than the present, something to come, something not yet a datum. Even in the earliest conscious efforts of infancy, this sense of the other, the not-present, must be there; not yet analyzed out, not named, not explicitly distinct, yet dimly felt, a sensed contrast, intense as the infant's desire for food is intense. As the call for food is probably the most intense of our early experiences — far more so than any noting of particular sense-data *except* the hunger and the milk that satisfies it — so this is probably the very source of man's notion of otherness, of one thing other than another, external to that other. We learn that red is other than green, that a smell is different from a taste, long after we learn that the food is other than the hunger for it. But, you ask, what is this mere otherness, vaguest of notions? What has it to do with an external world?

Phrase the question thus: what is the desired food felt to be *other than*? Obviously, not so much other than the desire, as other than the present state of emptiness, the pangs

of hunger. The effort to get the food, the strenuous cry that calls for it, as a subjective state of the striving self, is as yet hardly in the picture. The infant hasn't reached the stage of self-consciousness, to be aware of his own effort. He doesn't yet know *that* he desires; he knows, dimly at first, then more and more clearly as week succeeds week, *what* he desires, and he knows his gnawing emptiness. He does indeed make violent efforts to get his food; he does so just as much as the adult who knows how to direct his own efforts and make them effective. The difference between them is that the baby hasn't learned how to make his effort effective; it is misdirected, random. He can't get the food himself, he can only cry out, kick, and writhe. But it is effort none the less. Even so, what he is conscious of is the end desired and the present pangs, as a given bodily state opposed to the desired end. And so it is with all the efforts he will make for the rest of his life. In every case of effort, what lies in the focus of consciousness is the desired end in contrast with the present situation. The otherness that matters is between these two. The current against which he will try to swim is just *not* what he wants. The obscure speech he will try to understand is just *not* the articulate words he wants to hear; and so on. Always the present facts are something to be changed, removed, destroyed, to be replaced by the desired end. The effort he makes is what does the changing and replacing. And effort is doing work, and work is the overcoming of resistance. So man ever feels when he makes an effort; effort is hard, just so far as it is effort. The contrast between the present and the desired future turns out to be the resistance of the present state of affairs, its opposing of the change he wants. Man, as he grows from infancy, is ever re-learning this earliest lesson: if he would gain the ends he desires, he must overcome the resistance offered by his environing data — resistance in countless forms, from the inertia of his brain that would prevent him from concentrating on a problem, to the weight of the heavy stone he tries to lift, or any other state of affairs in which he strives to bend the forces of nature to his own uses.

Note then that the otherness of the end-in-view to the effort has come to mean the resistance of the present situation

to the coming of that end. Yet it is not the end itself which is resisted by the present facts. There is no resistance between an idea and a fact; only between the fact and the realizing of the idea. That is, the resistance is between the present fact and the *effort* toward the end. The *drive* to the end is what is opposed to the immediate facts : they resist that drive. But more. The otherness is now felt to be a genuine externality. If the present fact is other than the effort, it is so because the effort is *against* the fact : and *vice-versa*. Real and genuine otherness is marked by opposition, by resistance. If A dovetails smoothly into B, we say B is a transformation of A, A further developed, as the landing of a stone on the ground is but the fall of the stone carried out to the finish. True externality holds only where B as it were repels the advances of A, where B resists A. Such externality we find between the effort and the present facts.

But is it of a different sort from the externality between one stick and another ? One stick resists the encroachment of another. Yet no one thinks they are in two different worlds external to each other. Let us look further into the relation between effort and given fact.

The professor in his study lifts the heavy dictionary. He would say that *he*, as personal conscious individual, makes the effort. So speaks crude everyday language : so too we all believe, even though we are puzzled to find a satisfactory theory of the "he", the self. Yet, if we were quite matter-of-fact here, we should identify the self with the wish-force, the push of origination that constitutes the effort. So when our endeavours are frustrated, we say that *we* are frustrated. And what frustrates us is not our desire, our striving, ourself, but an opposing not-self. It is through this practical function alone that we get the idea of something *outside* the self. No mere presentation, no datum for contemplation, suggests it : for no such datum contains a note either of self or not-self — only of some qualitative content, still or changing, to be analyzed, watched to see where it comes out, and the like. And this not-self discovered in effort-experience is a not-self just because it is a *power* opposed to the effort which is the self. Only powers can oppose each other : beings, facts, present data do

not oppose anything — they simply are there and are what they are. A blue flower is not a red flower, but we do not see it fighting against some tendency to be red, we see it as blue and that is all. Only a power can be genuinely a not-self, because it alone can oppose the self. But what is it, to be a power? It is to *do* something. And what is the evidence that the book, lifted by the professor, is doing something? This: the book is to a degree *overcoming* his effort. Power is shown to him, *can* be shown to him, only as in a measure *overpowering* him. He directly feels it doing this — compelling him, if he would raise the book, to work hard, to put forth more exertion than if he were lifting a paper. And this power, residing in the object, is something not himself, not in *himself*, but in *itself*. So, what makes the object something by itself, apart from him, is its power. It is said that one whose limbs are paralyzed comes to regard them as external, alien to himself. If we were all normally so paralyzed, we should say he is right. As John Dewey has said, the object is that which *objects*.

### 3. WHAT IS POWER?

Power is on the same plane as effort. Like effort, it has the character of a source, an origin. Its very nature lies in this efficacy by which the object expresses itself; it is the object's self, its originality, that which gives the object a status as a real being. That is why it is so natural for us all to connect power with reality. We feel that what is imaginary has no power of itself, that a real thing *makes* itself felt, *does* something. So writes Cardinal Mercier on the contrast of imagination with perception "But a slight effort at introspection reveals that I can construct and arrange the images of my imagination at will, that I can travel on the wings of my fancy whithersoever I please; whilst with perceptions the case is *toto caelo* different, for their co-ordination and succession, far from depending on my will and action, are often forced upon me even against my will. I must conclude, then that there is a world distinct from myself and my states of consciousness." (*Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 394. London, Kegan Paul, 1916). To be sure power is not all that



goes to make up the content of reality : everything that is real has other characters too. But power is primary. It is the reality-coefficient of real things. We say "he is a real man" meaning that he is neither dream nor dreamer, but does what a man would do. Thus power is a sign of, or rather identically is, a being or thing or event "on its own", existing in its own right, real. It is the *esse* of every *ens*. It is no mere datum, something given to the contemplative eye : it is more like a *factum* or *fiat*, the names we gave above to effort; though we do not feel it being made, so to speak, as we do in the case of our own effort, but get it ready-made. Nor does it matter that this power is called out or summoned forth by our own effort. The point is that when it is called out it shows itself to have a being of its own — it overpowers our effort in some degree. Here emerges the note of independence. What overcomes is so far other and more than what it overcomes. So we *experience* something independent of our experience — for thought, as above said, a hopeless paradox. How can we be aware of something independent of our awareness, when the meaning of independence implies existence apart from our awareness? How can we experience the not-experienced? But when in action we sense the object as a power, we are sensing it as something that is in and by itself, not depending on our experience of it, and we see that the experience may be dropped out. Thus action crosses the line without crossing it, being in a higher dimension than thought, and the epistemologist's paradox with which we introduced the present argument, is no more. And because we human beings are primarily actors, from the first sucking of the mother's breast to the final struggle for breath, we inevitably believe in the external world existing of itself, independent of any experience of ours. Primarily actors indeed! Everything we learn about the world is accompanied or preceded by some act. What is waking from sleep but stirring, stretching, raising the eyelids, turning the head, focussing the eyes, and so on? We *use* our sense-organs, we don't just have them. We *attend* here or there; we don't just see, we look; we don't just hear, we listen. Of course, stimuli also crowd in upon us to which we are but receptive. But we had first to wake, and waking is active pro-

cess. However involuntarily we begin to wake, instantly thereafter enters active effort. Fundamental is action in our lives; equally so is our belief in external nature.

So it is then that we become aware of a being *per se*, a not-self, a something which is not *in* our minds or necessarily *tied* to them. It may enter our experience, as when we sense it or think of it, or it may dwell apart. But its power shows it to have a being of its own to a degree — power being always of degree. And in action we see or feel, "sense" we may say, or "know", (either word will do) this being of its own directly. There is no reasoning in it, neither is there any faith. There is simple straightforward certainty. This being which we sense or know may have been conferred upon the objects that show power by a Creator, or may be matter of blind chance, or so far as the present argument goes may have any source you please. But without power, no being. Power is being and being is power.

But the spectator-attitude will find this most difficult to grant. For it can no more describe power than it can describe effort. It cannot *of itself alone* envisage power, it cannot see, hear, touch, taste or smell the dynamic push by which the object exerts its power. Just so, we cannot visualize the efficacy by which the billiard cue moves the ball. We can only see the motion of the cue, and the contact, and the motion of the ball. Hume was right, from the contemplative perspective. Touch comes nearest of the external senses to conveying power, but only because we have to touch what we try to push and move, and resisting pressure comes through touch. A weight laid on the back of the hand offers no resistance until we move the hand up. Power is the object of action. And the epistemological problem would not have arisen but for this blind spot in the contemplative eye which cannot merely by itself comprehend the practical point of view — though that eye can *prehend* it if the owner of the eye is willing. The real object we can indeed think of as real, *after* we have been taught by practical experience; and as we have so much of that early in life, we early get the thought of external reality. But we could never get the notion from thought *alone*. Action is the door-opener to reality.

As in the case of effort, so here with power : we must be careful to distinguish the pressure-sensation or sensum of the heavy body that we lift, from the power that the body thereby shows. The sensed quality of pressure is but a datum like color or sound; it conveys of itself no notion of externality. Externality is found when we feel our effort being overcome. It is the compulsion that gives the externality : the desire is to some degree defeated, more effort *must* be called out if it is to succeed. That is what power means : effort is compelled, if it would gain its end, to use such and such a degree. Not the pressure of the resistance, but the opposition of the pressure to the effort, is what denotes power. Resistance, taken as *mere* pressure sense-datum, has no suggestion of externality; taken as thwarting the effort, it is externality. And that is the way we inevitably do take it when we act. From the quite passive-spectator point of view the experience of pressure is all there is : action is not in the scene. Wherefore this view, that resistance gives evidence of external being, has been discarded by so many epistemologists.

Need we add that there is no hint of "animism" in the effort-resistance situation ? As if one effort could be resisted only by another effort, one will by another will ! It would be as reasonable to say that a flying baseball could be stopped only by another baseball. In our daily experience with the world, we do indeed sometimes — all too often — meet resistance from other wills than our own. But there is nothing in the resistance offered by heavy bodies to suggest that they have feelings, still less conscious purposes. The accusation of animism, frequently made by opponents, is a caricature drawn in the interest of refutation.

For of course the resistance we meet in everyday life is offered by or located in many different kinds of objects. With heavy bodies, resistance takes the form of compelling our effort to bring about a high degree of muscular strain — of the experience of an intense strain-sense-datum, if you like. When we try to relax while the doctor is probing a sore, the resistance takes the form of compelling an intense concentration on the feelings of rest and quiescence, if we would succeed. When we try to persuade a fellow man by argument, the resistance

takes the form of compelling intense thought about the evidence for the view we defend — if we would succeed. And so on. Resistance is shown in many different ways, as there are many different kinds of power — as many as there are different kinds of beings: the power of inert bodies to gravitate, of muscles to twitch in the involuntary pain-reflex, of other minds to think for themselves, etc. But more of this later.

How then does the "otherness" between the external world and one's mind differ from the "otherness" between two sticks or stones that collide and resist each other's motion?

#### 4. THE MIND-WORLD DUALISM.

Suppose that some kindly person enters the study when the professor is about to lift the heavy book, and knowing the feebleness of the professor's muscles puts his hands under the professor's hands and himself does the lifting: which help the professor passively accepts, putting no effort of his own into the process. Then the professor feels the pressure of the volume on his hands — a pressure sense-datum. But it is not resistance that he feels. He is himself doing nothing, nothing opposes his effort, no external not-self is evidenced in that particular experience. True, he sees that the book is other than his hands; but there is no opposition in this otherness, because there is no force exerted and only forces or powers can oppose each other. And the only feeling of a resisting power that he can have comes when he puts forth effort. Now all effort is conscious, for it is trying to do something we *mean* to do; it has an end in *view*, and viewing is awareness. So the otherness of a resisting object is the opposition of a power which by its very opposition shows its independence of our conscious experience, our *mind*. Whether or not this independent object will turn out on further investigation to be also a mind, as idealists claim, is another question. At any rate, it is independent of our experience of it, independent of our particular mind. And as we meet so many objects that offer resistance to our strivings — all alike in that respect, however different in degree and manner of resistance, in qualitative content and so on — we find them all together making up that vast environment which we dub the external world, in contrast with

our own mind. Now if a stick or stone were making conscious efforts when it collided with other bodies, doubtless it would feel as we do and see those other bodies as together making up an external world in contrast with its own internal experience or consciousness. And in that case the otherness of physical things toward one another would be of the same sort as that of man's world and his mind, that meets it. But of course we have no empirical evidence of conscious mind in inorganic nature. We *have* evidence, however, that each stick and stone and every other physical being or process is something of a power by itself and to that extent, however slight it may be, is independent of every other. It may be the case, to be sure, that many powers apparently independent are but the working of other powers, fewer in number, subtler, discovered only after long scientific research; perhaps too these other powers (e.g. interatomic energies and such) show a degree of mutual dependence in their working, as for instance atomic stability is due to the mutual attraction of positive and negative charges. But the working together of things offers no denial of the independent existence — to some degree, however slight — of the many things that work together. At the same time, the bodies and events that make up what we call the physical world, have strong family resemblance — all being spatio-temporal — and seem quite unlike minds which act with an end in view. So we come to accept the physical as one world independent of our minds, with its elements interacting and forming an orderly system. And since our minds, with their looking before and after, seem so different from bodies, we tend to believe the independence between them and the physical world is far greater than the independence between the elements of the latter. For independence has degrees, as power and effort have degrees; it may hold of many aspects, or only a few, or all or none, of any two things, or more. To be sure, this is only to state how men naturally come to view the mind-world dualism as more of a dualism than the dualism of two sticks or stones or quanta. Whether or not it is so is a special question of metaphysic, and beyond our present task. Enough that we know the physical world exists apart from our conscious dealings with it.



But we are entitled to a further result. The practical perspective throws light on the problem of the self. We seem to have taken for granted just now that each of us has a real substantial ego, a mind perduring through the years, one and normally-undivided. And as is well known, the epistemologists have had as much trouble over the proof of such a being as they have over the proof of the external world. Yet of course every one is quite as certain of himself as a real substantial being, as he is of the external world. See then the evidence that the effort-power experience provides, to explain this certainty.

##### 5. THE BEING OF THE SELF.

Note that the independence between the effort and the power that resists it, holds, to some extent at least, in both directions. If the external world is independent of the knowing of it, also the effort one makes, being *originative*, is so far independent of the external world. For it too is a power, to some degree however slight. And if a power, then a being in its own right. Herein the practical point of view reveals what the contemplative epistemologist has been unable to provide. Descartes said : *I think, therefore I exist*. As many have seen, the self which is a thinker, beholder, senser and the like — the merely contemplative self as Descartes took it to be when he proceeded to argue for the being of the external world — such a self is by no means intuited as a substantial being. There is no content to lay hold of in the mere beholder. Hume saw this when he declared that there is no witness of the self in the series of impressions and ideas. But when we sense our efforts there is something substantial, there is a content, even though it is very small, scarcely describable, vanishing as a spark vanishes, for it is the power which initiates our acts. And what we sense in our own initiative is the innermost sanctuary of the self, so to speak : the spring of desire and choice which registers the reality of the desirer and decider. Not that the desire is something outside or behind, in addition to the effort made — inside it rather, the spring of it, and so far a power, however limited. Limited indeed it is, very limited,

much more so than is generally realized. Each self has originative power, but no power to create. Whatever he makes or does, so far as it is more than his desiring and deciding, owes its success to the laws of nature which he did not make. The will to raise his arm would not succeed in raising it but for the healthy process in the nerve-current issuing in the contracting muscles. If the process is inhibited by paralysis or other cause, the will is *almost* ineffective; it may get little further than the motor centres. That is why a man is morally just as bad when his intention to do an evil deed is frustrated by some power external to his will, as if his intention were carried out to fulfilment — and correspondingly just as good if his intention is good, provided he makes actual effort and doesn't just think about making it. But the power of initiative is there, and so far is witnessed a conscious self, real in and by itself, in some degree independent of the external world. Power is being and being is power; the being of the self is its power of initiating a conscious act. Substance it is too, so far; for substance is dynamic, not static, an urge to act so and so, an active power. So, to however small a degree, we do directly intuit the self as a substance in the Aristotelian-Thomist sense. Much more there is to the self, to be sure, as we are soon to see. But in action we do or can at least feel it as a being, an *ens* or entity existing in its own right. The self considered *merely* in its contemplative function shows no direct evidence of being a substance. But do not forget that in conscious effort we also sense the identity of the thinker with the doer. There is no least separation between these two phases of mind. And so the latter, the active phase, confers upon the thinker the solidity, the *esse*, that makes the thinker a real substantial self. If the Thomists had, as a rule, approached the problem of the self from the point of view of active effort, we suggest that they would have agreed to this. And surely they can do so without denying that the self is, in its purely cognitive phase, not directly given. Descartes, to be sure, had no right to say that the self and its states are more certainly given than the outer world. The self is discovered only in its relation to that world; neither is more certain than the other, both are equally beyond doubt.

But further. This substantial self, discovered in action, is not only mental. It is also bodily, an embodied mind. Often our efforts are bodily movements, or better, the physical push that initiates those movements. Immediate experience confirms this, the Thomist view. True, there is effort of attention toward other things than bodily acts, viz., intellectual attention to a problem, and reasoning. But also there is bodily effort. So the substantial being which is our efforts is compound, both physical and mental. The self initiates the push that leads to the straining muscle, as well as the push that leads to the solution of a mathematical problem. It is spiritual, it is also material. But its physical efforts are limited at most to a rather small volume of the physical world: the limits of those efforts define its body. Man cannot act on the outer world of bodies except through his own body. Nor can he wholly control his body, or rather let us say, he has not yet learned how to do so. Circulation, digestion and the like he can influence; he can even stop them by suicide. But he cannot add a cubit to his stature, nor prevent his dying sooner or later. He may have a latent power to do these eventually; at least there is no proof that he has not. When we consider the extent, unbelievable a century ago, to which man has unearthed powers in the atoms of inorganic nature, it seems not impossible that he may sometime discover powers, hidden at present in his own mind-body self, which will transform it into a harmonious and undying whole — a thing which at present it is far from being.

Even so, the self so far discovered is a rather poor thing, much less than the enduring complex ego which every one of us is perfectly certain that he is. Does the action-power experience then ground the latter? It does. It assures us of a lasting self, a continuing substance with characteristic properties, what we call an individual person with a life-history. And as follows.

The effort to fulfill an aim starts with the momentary self that launches the effort. When the aim is fulfilled, the push of desire, which is the essence of the self in its practical aspect, is what is fulfilled, completed, made concretely actual. The desire has lasted through, and the self with it. One and the same self perdures through the process. *He* now has what

he has been wanting. *He* feels *his* enriched self. How long is the process? How long does this little particular self of this particular desire last? That depends on the desire. There are momentary desires, quickly fulfilled; there are more enduring desires, there are desires that persist through the years. I scratch my itching cheek — the affair of a second. I hungrily eat my dinner, a matter of perhaps an hour. I receive an appointment for which I have gone through months of toil; I reap a reputation after years of severe labor. These are in turn of a longer-lasting self. Is there some purpose then, some fundamental desire that lasts as long as one's body lives? Yes: the desire to keep that body consciously alive. The self, we must not forget, is one's body as well as one's mind. And perhaps the most enduring self we can point to, at least at a first glance, is this life-desirer, the same because of its lasting purpose to continue the body's life — a purpose seen in the first struggles of the babe to breathe, the first cries, writhings, etc., up to the battle against the last great enemy, death. True, the body is not the same body materially; but the bodily *feeling* at each moment projects itself into the next and that into the next and so on indefinitely. It is the unity of the process from effort to attainment that is the continuing unity of the self. (Readers of Whitehead's *Process and Reality* may note how close this is to his view of "actual occasions" of the personal social order). The same is witnessed in memory too, for memory is the above in reverse, and memory is of one's own experience. Not that I remember only how the Falls of Niagara looked when I saw them 50 years ago; more than that, I remember my seeing them, the subjective feeling that was part of myself, *conscious* of the Falls in the external world. What was the self of which the feeling was a part? It was at least the desire in that then living body to continue the vital experiences, to go on living, a desire which has so far been fulfilled. The primary or primitive self is this striving; it grows into a larger self as more desires, not all of the body, gradually arise. But of course no permanent sense-content or image can be identified in this desire; the permanent core of the self is that extra-rational, well-nigh indescribable moving principle, the substantial form-matter or embodied soul, indescribable as effort, power, force are indescribable in terms

suited to passive contemplation. Not, of course, that the self is always a *coherent* group of desires, bodily and mental; every one knows it is a battle-ground where desires conflict, where perhaps the contest is gradually lessened as one's personality becomes more developed, systematic, organized. But probably it is never completely organized in human life as we know human life.

The self we directly experience, is a superstructure of desires built on the mind-body impulse for continued conscious life as the foundation. And so the man is individuated by his body because one body differs from another in place and other spatial characters; *materia signata*, which the Thomists say is man's principle of individuation. But the body is active too, and therein is another principle of individuation, namely will or desire. Each man has a responsible choice of his own; to strive for this or that is *his* choice, *his* desire and no one else's, even when the object of his desire is the same as the object of some one else's desire. Here is the truth of the Scotist view; both Duns Scotus and Aquinas were right in their positive doctrine. Man has two principles of individuation because he is both body and mind. But they are not separated in him; his desire and choice is expressed in his physical action, the action of his individual body, of "this flesh and these bones" as Aquinas said.

Further yet we may go. The power-perspective gives evidence of the perduring self as more than a chooser or desirer; for it is also a content, a complex being with a more or less permanent *character*. A friend offers me a cocktail; I try to repress my love of gin, which I know is bad for me; I feel the resistance of my old desire. A more or less lasting desire or set of desires constituting my fuller, more enduring self, offers resistance to the momentary desire; love of good health resists love of gin, and conversely. Is not this the best evidence we could have, of the relatively systematic self — the power of certain deep desires lasting perhaps through a lifetime? A man's character is his loves, inborn and acquired; they are the powers that show their strength when a momentary desire would go against them. — Enough on the self: we are concern-



ed only to lay bare the source of the certainty every man has, of his own substantial being.

Epistemology, working from the perspective of contemplation, has been quite as unable to justify our belief in a self as our belief in the external world. Cutting off the subjective realm of thought in the Cartesian manner, it lost its grip on the world; then on the very substance of what it cut off, the self. If there is no self demonstrable, how should there be a subjective realm, different from external reality? What would differentiate that realm? And all because from its spectator-point of view it cannot envisage action and power, the first clues to being. The practical perspective gives these, and already has afforded something of a metaphysic in the above. But how to get these theorists to adopt it! Let us hammer again on the contrast of thought and action.

#### 6. MORE ON THE CONTRAST OF THOUGHT AND ACTION

Ever this contrast needs emphasis for the philosopher, who is primarily a thinker. Ever he tends and will tend to overlook, belittle or deny the part played by action in man's knowledge of reality. He must look down from his tower to view the scene; none could see it fairly from the ground where men live and struggle. He rightly feels that the onlooker sees most of the game; but he often forgets that one must have played the game himself, to understand what he sees. Let him remind himself that playing is not watching, let him realize the difference of the two, let him realize that playing has, like watching, a positive note all its own; for man's game is with reality.

Thought we have already suggested, is of indefinitely great extent: action, with its concentration, has little extent, is nearly all *intent*. Thought has for its object real things, unreal things, possibles, impossibles; it can even think of the meaningless, the nothing — else there would not be these words. It can think of independent being, of mental being, of thinking itself, of a self that is doing the thinking. We can find no limits for thought. True enough, it cannot find all these objects intelligible, definable, clear and distinct. Sometimes it is little more than bare awareness of something, as it were a

*minimum visibile*; so perhaps for the meaningless or the nothing. Nevertheless it contemplates these and other things, perhaps arranges them in an order of increasing intelligibility from the nothing to the very articulate world of scientific knowledge, or even the utmost fulness of being which is Deity, *ens realissimum*. Such is the limitless, the infinite breadth of the realm where thought may wander, and has wandered. The area has no bounds. But it is only an area, two dimensional. Thought has, of its own initiative, no ability to go outward, as in a third dimension: that, as we have seen, is the function of active effort; though indeed thought, having once learned from action to conceive the outward, the external world, can include even that, yet only in perspective, as distance is shown in a picture. Thinking is like vision as in Berkeley's theory of vision. For Berkeley the eye has maximum range throughout the flat or two-dimensional surface presented to it, but no perception of depth or externality. So with thinking. Action, on the other hand, provides the depth-factor which, for Berkeley, vision could not furnish — the externality of things, the reality-coefficient of experience. (If Berkeley had only seen this!) That is why we have spoken of action as another dimension, over and above thought. It is the straight line from eye to distant object, the light-ray in reverse whose projection on thought's retina is, as Berkeley said, but a point. The datum of active effort is indeed scarcely bigger; so too the note of power that meets and resists the effort — for contemplative thought so thin, definable perhaps only as the counterpoint of the effort. But the line and the point where it impacts the retina are projections, literally projections, thrown forth by the objects which are forces, powers. Geometry conveys no notion of power, as power conveys no notion of vision's panorama. Polar opposites they are — one of the countless polarities that throng reality, and for human knowledge of being the root-polarity: action that senses being and gives *significance* to knowledge, thought that discerns the spread and order of reality, and the paths for man to tread therein.

Let it be clear once for all that in rejecting the extreme rationalist claims for intellect as self-sufficient for the knowledge of reality — claims made by the idealists of the Hegelian

type — we are not going to the other extreme. We have already said that the criterion of reality will turn out to include factors due to the cognitive and affective phases. And before long we shall see why. Certainly thought and sense are, for man, indispensable for the full comprehension of being. Certainly intellect is indispensable: intellect *beholds* being. Properly speaking, nothing else *can* behold it. The point is this: intellect, stimulated early in life by the active phase, *sees* that it has reality before it. Action, *mere* action without any contemplation at all, could behold nothing. It wouldn't even be conscious; just a drive. Action and thought cannot be divorced in man's awareness of being. The actor thinks and beholds while acting, else action would be blind, unseeing, objectless. Indeed, intellect caps the climax to which action leads up. The two are together, the two are one, though in two phases — and that one is the conscious mind. But in order to see the distinction of the two phases and the respective contributions, we must treat them separately. Philosophers alas! have been so used to meeting extreme exclusive views in one another that they tend to interpret the indispensability of action as the dispensability of thought. So deeply ingrained is the human bent toward exclusion. And so, when we say that action alone provides the note of being — as we do say, for a much-needed emphasis — we mean: action provides it to thought, contemplation, intellect. There would be no providing if there were no recipient. And the receiver of the notion is, after all, the one that has it, though he did not give it to himself. And when he has it, he sees into it, sees its nature, characters, traits, as action cannot do. Intellect may thus by mere reflection without action furnish a genuine metaphysic, because already early in life action has played its part and given intellect the wherewithal to work with. So the husband, provided by his wife with the strength-giving comforts of the home, goes forth to the office and conducts his business alone.

#### 7. THE EFFORT TO KNOW

Perhaps some of the philosophers felt a little guilty in neglecting the active phase of mind; for they tried to make up

by importing a kind of action into the knowing process. The idea was that knowing does something to the bare datum — synthesizes it with other data, views it in its relations, and so on. Of this view Kant is the classic instance, in his theory of the understanding acting on sense-data and transforming them into objects. Followers of Kant have said that this activity of mind is not a psychological process; but how can there be any action in it unless it is one? Otherwise the term is only a metaphor. But anyway there *is* often a genuine action in knowing, namely the effort to attend. We *strive* to discern the shape of a house in the twilight, to hear better the speech of the orator, to discover the solution of the problem of 3 bodies. Upon what then is this effort directed? What does it seek to change? Where does it meet resistance? Consider what happens when we attend. Attending to something is focussing on that thing rather than some other thing. We try to hear nothing else but the speaker's words, to turn consciousness away from all other sounds; attention is individuating, concentrating, selecting. There is no *mere* attention; it draws its life from the object, *directing* itself to that object and no other. And it strives to enter into the object, to vanish in the object, to let that object alone *be*. As Aristotle said, the mind in a way becomes the object. Attention does not try to change the object, to act on it in any way; rather to *be* the object. Because attention is active, many have thought it must do something to its object; but its activity lies in *directing* itself and in diving into the datum with a total immersion. In solving a picture puzzle, we don't *transform* the seen lines into the image of a horse or tree. We attend to the image of a horse or tree and see if it fits the outlines sensed in the picture. To attempt to alter the present object of attention is but to bring up some imagined object and see whether the two are alike, or even to substitute the imagined for the original, to attend to the imagined alone. Attention thus does nothing to what it is aware of: it only looks and lets the things themselves decide. There is no acting on the object; there is only the choosing or selecting of the object and the act of diving into it, as one plunges into the stream to be carried along. And if the only activity is that of choosing and entering the object, to disappear therein and do nothing but let the ob-

ject speak for itself, the only resistance that attention meets comes from something in the attender's own mind, from its native inertia, from the attraction of more intense stimuli, from the lure of other interests than knowledge. Activity of attention for the sake of knowledge changes only the mind of the attender and is resisted only by the habits, biases, laziness and the like, of that mind. It gives no note of external reality in the object; its activity lies in the choice to sink into the object, to know *what* the object is. And so far as the attender really makes that choice, the object offers no resistance, but rather acquiesces and shows its nature for what it is. Attention is not a demand which may be resisted but a question to be answered. Questioning waits for the light; if no light comes, that is bad; if light comes, good. But you cannot resist a question, though you may resist the asking of it; and *that* resistance is offered by the stupid or prejudiced mind of the asker himself. True, the object may be opaque or dark, but that is not resistance *against* attention, for it does not inhibit attention. Darkness is but the absence of light and not a power in itself. Thus in the contemplative phase — attention seeking knowledge — there is no evidence of reality external to the mind. We attend to the color of the real sunset; we attend also to the picture of the centaur framed in imagination.

It may seem that there is one type-case of the effort to know, where the object itself compels belief, thereby showing a power of its own. Such a case is logical implication.  $2 + 3 = 5$ : this we could not doubt if we would. We attend to the rose and see it is pink; there is no feeling of necessity, only a sense of fact. And we might have seen the color wrong if we were color-blind. But if we attend to  $2 + 3$ , we feel an absolute compulsion — the phrase is not too strong — to adjoin the 5. We *could not* see a 6 instead. We *know* we are not deceived. Try to believe in the 6, and you are prevented, your effort does nothing, is completely overpowered. No doubt the wholly irresistible strength of the logical implication is what led some of the Greek thinkers to ascribe to mathematical truth the highest degree of reality.

Well, certainly the proposition  $2 + 3 = 5$  cannot be doubted. But is this a case of power overcoming effort? Can

we really try to doubt it? A real effort does something, however little, to the present fact against which it is directed — at least normally so, no paralysis or the like intervening. Even the cliff I vainly try to move is for ultramicroscopic vision slightly contracted by my push. Even my hopeless effort to touch the moon moves my arm toward the sky and lessens the moon's distance. What then would my effort to doubt  $2 + 3 = 5$  accomplish, toward diminishing the necessity of that truth? Nothing. The fact is,  $2 + 3 = 5$  is not the kind of thing upon which effort may be directed — except effort of attention, and attention never affects its object. It is not the sort of thing which is open to alteration, to being affected in any way. The effort-power category does not apply to it. It is a truth, an eternal truth if you like: but there is nothing about it to suggest that it has *being* outside of, external to, the thought of it, nor even to suggest that it is within the subjective realm of mind. It says only: if or wherever there are 2 distinct things and 3 distinct things there are 5 of them. The things may be externally real, or illusions, or dream-things, or anything else. The notion of real-unreal is not pertinent. It may hold of an independent external world, if there is one wherein things are distinct. It will hold equally if there is none, just because it is conditional. In brief, it lies in the realm of possibles: even as do all so-called mathematical "constructs." These possibles are not *made* by our minds. We do not command  $2 + 3$  to be 5. In no sense are they products of our minds. Seven-dimensional geometry may never have been thought of by men, but its theorems hold in its own region none the less. Nor does the logical necessity which cements its theorems together make seven-dimensional geometry real, for it is not real. We do not have to adapt our behavior to it if we would live. Logical necessity is indifferent to reality; it may belong to the real world all you please, but it belongs also to many worlds that are not real, to hypergeometries, dramas, fables, detective stories, and such. These are possibles, and systems of possibles; they have no objective existence in the sense in which our external world has it. They exert no power, they do but reveal their make-up to the attentive mind, whose effort of attention seeks not to affect them but just to see them. They are not events or pro-



cesses transforming a chaotic into an orderly world, as we move a jumbled collection of beads into the shape of a square. If like some Platonists you insist that they are real because they are timelessly true and unchangeable, you are using "real" in another sense than that in which we call the everyday world, the space-time world, real. True, some of these possibles do hold of the actual world: arithmetic and probably Euclidean geometry. That is because the "postulates" on which these are based do happen to be realized in the world. There are distinct things which can be counted; the world is not just a smooth slush. And it seems to have only three spatial dimensions. But why? Why not 5 dimensions of space? There would be nothing contradictory in that; there is a perfectly consistent five-dimensional geometry. Why the possibles that are realized rather than any of the infinitely numerous other possibles? Surely if they had inherent power to realize themselves, all would to some degree be realized, as is not the case in our world. No, reality as we meet it in our living is a selection out of the infinite possibles, and the power, the selection, the realization is something more than they. The compulsion which any of them exercises over thought is, in brief, a possible not an actual compulsion. Insist if you will that this logical necessity shows its independence of thought by its very necessity; we have said so too. That only means that there is an external realm of possibles which thought does not create. But they are only possibles after all. We do not have to believe that two distinct things and three distinct things *actually* are five distinct things, for there is, as far as thought alone is concerned, no certainty that there are two and three distinct things. Thought, unlike action, is not necessarily centred upon being; though of course, when once led by action to see being, it may become so centred. But the clue to reality is not given by thought alone.

So much for the separability, the lack of necessary connection, between mere thought untaught by action, and reality. But if thought is thus limited of itself, what of sense? Doesn't sense give us the clue to reality? Thought may imagine all sorts of things: sense doesn't imagine, sense directly perceives. And sense, like thought, is cognitive, contemplative, being awareness of data, not action.

The view is old, old because it is natural. And to see why it is natural is, strangely enough, to see why sense no more than thought conveys the note of being, rather why action does convey that note. Certainly we all tend to think that a very intense sense-datum is too strong to be imaginary; it must come from something real. A thump on the back, a blinding light, an explosion that stings the ear-drum — these we take as marks of reality. Why? They offer no resistance to any effort of ours. They hit us too suddenly to be resisted. We are passive to them. Why then believe that a big explosion is real, while a faint buzz may be imaginary? Obviously, because of the *power* in the former. True enough, we haven't verified the power. The only way to verify power is to try to overcome it and fail, in some degree or other. Why then do we feel the intense sense-datum as a power? Because we have already learned, learned early in life, that intensity of stimulus usually goes with difficulty of removal. The heavier the weight and the stronger the pressure-sensation from it, the harder it is to lift. The greater the speed of the baseball and the stronger the blow when it strikes the hand, the harder it is to stop. Thus the strong sense-datum *suggests*, almost invincibly suggests, a power within it, which we are confident we could verify if we tried. And so we almost invincibly credit sensation with a guarantee of external reality which we deny to its fainter copy, imagination. Natural of course, and 9 times out of 10 right. But not always — there are many strong sense-illusions, as all know — usually called hallucinations. *Mere presentation* to sense, to thought, yes, to mystical experience — mere presentation carries of itself no note of external being. As C. I. Lewis has said: "But a being which could not act, would live out its life within the bounds of immediacy. It could find no difference between its own content of feeling and reality." (*An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*. Open Court Press, 1946, p. 21).

Perhaps the pure thinker will here ask: what on earth has the notion of power to do with the notion of reality? Are we not arbitrarily pinning the two together? Why pin reality to power rather than to timeless logical necessity? Answer: there is nothing arbitrary about it: the thing is inevitable. You do it yourself! You believe in a real independent external world —

we all do. We have only been seeking the source of that belief, and have found the source in the power of the world over our action. You are looking for something *logically implied* in the meaning of reality. Of course you can't find anything by contemplating the notion — the only way to find what reality means for man is to see how man is related to it. And he is related to the things he calls real as to powers. Even you, who reify and deify the timeless realm of logical truth, of the eternal Ideas, and such, — even you do so, because you believe (as did Plato) that those Ideas will give you power to withstand the evils of this world, to live a richer, fuller, better life, to mould the lives of men into the best social forms, to bring men up out of the cave into the light. It is only that you believe there is *greater* power in the Ideas than in the external natural world, that you call them the ultimate reality.

But we should never think of or seek this greater power to come, unless we sensed a present power working against our aims. The notion of power is first awakened by hindrance to our effort, and hindrance means — what? Effort is toward a goal, and the goal isn't yet real. Hence the contrast between real and imaginary — the contrast between the end sought and the present fact with its resisting inertia. If the latter is the real, the former is the ideal — the ideal for the moment, however trivial, as when we lift the hand to grasp a pencil, or for weeks and months, as when we dig and plant a garden, or for years, as when we build up a stable and prosperous business. Action is the contrast; the contrast is the very nerve of action — the ideal good *versus* the brute fact. The sense of the real is aroused by the sense of the ideal, and conversely; each reinforces the other. The good and the fact, right and might — these in their conflict and their longed-for union voice the whole drama of human life. Is it not then to be expected that the effort-power, the right-might polarity, should be the key to our notion of reality? For it is, from our human point of view, the thing that makes life earnest, moving, tragic and also blessed.

This touch of sincerity, even this utter seriousness, the seriousness of man's need to live, should of course pervade all philosophy. Ever is the speculative point of view tempted to lose it, to play with ideas, and to rest there. Yet it is seldom

entirely lost. Even though the extreme rationalist denies the independence which makes the external world a serious matter for us men, he brings back that category in another guise. Witness Kant, who restored it in the practical realm of morals. What is the moral for Kant? Doing right for its own sake. Why indeed do we all feel the nobility of this motive, right for right's sake? Why does the pure-minded thinker also take it as his motto, in the form of knowledge for the sake of knowledge, independent of any practical benefit that may follow? Because he cannot but admire power that goes its own way, turning not to right or left, resisting all considerations of utility. Yet being, as he conceives, thinker rather than actor he will not grant the title of reality to the independence which physical power expresses, but confers that title on reason, logical necessity, and the like. He must put it somewhere, since being a man he must respect it, so he awards it to the object he most loves — reason. For him the first and great commandment is "thou shalt love reason with all thy mind." It would be the unpardonable sin to allow to action any voice in deciding what is the essence of reality. The trouble is that it takes a mighty effort of *will* for him to be willing to admit a second commandment like unto the first: "thou shalt love action as well as reason." Of course we cannot persuade him here. Persuasion to him follows from rational demonstration; he finds no other criterion of truth. As thinker, he *values* nothing else. How can you prove to a man that he ought to do so and so, if it appeals to no value that he feels? The hardest of all tasks for the theoretical thinker is to force his attention to look for evidence in the non-rational quarter. He can see no *ground* for it, and he believes he ought not to do that for which he sees no ground. How could he be induced to make the experiment, as it were wildly, capriciously, just to see what may come of it? How then *can* he acquiesce in the present thesis? In the end he must be driven to make the experiment, by realizing the hopelessness of the philosopher's quest on the purely theoretical basis. How many more centuries of heckling and bickering will be needed to bring this home to him?

For there is, no doubt, — must we re-iterate? — an extrarational quality in the notion of power. Not a superrational

one, nor an infra-rational one; there is no hint of grading here. Still less a contra-rational one, since the content is as it were not big enough to contain a self-contradiction; rather something in addition to the ordered and the deducible. Power is a unique datum, as its correlate effort is unique. Like effort, it has a minimum of describable content. We cannot quite say what it is. Scientists can define force only in terms of the sensed qualities mass and acceleration and have long been inclined to drop the dynamic notion of push. But though we can't quite say *what* power is, we are sure above all else *that* it is. It has the existential tang. It *makes* itself felt. It cannot be wished away; it has the compulsory quality that goes with being. Fictions we can alter or banish; we cannot banish the power with which a real thing opposes our desires, though we can manipulate that power for our own ends by using other powers of other things, as we lift a weight too heavy for our arms by using a lever. True, power is directly presented to our sense, if we may use the word "sense" loosely to denote a direct contact. We have also spoken of the sense of effort. Yet it is not a qualified content comparable with color or sound or pressure or smell. Those sense-data can be described, even if inadequately: colours are bright or dark, beautiful or ugly, sounds are harsh or smooth, high pitched or low, smells acrid or briny, and so on. All you can say of power is that it compels more or less — and what is compulsion? It cannot be translated into the language of other sense-data. To measure it by mass-acceleration is not to give the note of compulsion. Intellectual formulation cannot grasp it. Think of existence: something given indeed, something presented, but not itself a content, a describable qualitative datum. The point is old. Existence belongs to some presentations and not to others, as we know well — but by what given quality do we discern its presence? It is little of a *what*, but much of a *that* — *that* something is. And naturally so, if existence is power. The two are one, and the one is not matter for analysis, rather for acquiescence. We have not been describing it, only identifying it — or at any rate with the minimum possible of description, abounding in tautology. How natural too, that being so much beyond description, which is but the deliverance of clear and distinct presence, power should denote something

beyond the fact of presence, something outside presentation, real apart and by itself. Thus power points to a reflection of something beyond the line that bounds our experience, as we see the light from a fire below the horizon. The very poverty of it in respect of articulate content suggests this. And the suggestion is confirmed by the positive phase of power: for the independence, the aloofness, is a positive thing, namely *self-maintenance*. The power in being maintains itself — to a degree — when we would change or destroy it. Self-maintained is self-contained, a true thing-in-itself, though not unknown. There is no mystery about it; it is precisely what it is experienced as being. Kant was right in his belief in things-in-themselves, but wrong in denying that they can be known. As happens so often with philosophers, the positive doctrine is true, the negative false. As in pressing the surface of a stone we feel not a surface only but a solid, behind yet *within* the surface, so with any other object, a leaf, a wind, a current, or even a mind that refuses our requests, we sense its existence as its own internal power, the dynamic trait within or behind its surface sense-data, and in its self-maintenance showing that our experience is not essential to its being. Thus in a practical sense we can truly experience what is beyond our experience — for beyondness means independence and self-maintenance. From the point of view of sensing and thought, there is no experience of self-maintenance, hence from their point of view it is a plain paradox to speak of experiencing what is beyond experience. But action furnishes a perspective which enables us to see over the line that bounds our experience — as already declared above. Which is but another way of saying that acting takes one out of one's self. No wonder that the cure for morbid self-scrutiny lies in giving the patient something to do, some hard work.

Self-maintenance is the core, pith, and essence of power. We said that power is origivative: the same point. Power has a virtue, a self-validating quality, that nothing else has: a virtue in and by and of itself, self-originating, self-maintaining. Is this so hard to see? Only for the spectator-view. As merely presented to *observation*, whether of sense or intellect, no datum has a guarantee of maintaining itself beyond the moment of observation. It is just there to be viewed, viewed as now given,



a still object. The flying arrow moves, but the quality of flying is the still object of contemplation, identically the same *for thought* after the flight is over. So always for thought: its presentment is still, just what it is, obeying the law of identity. Whether it will maintain itself in time, contemplation has no notion. But action brings to light a new element: it meets the element of power, of self-maintenance not in the timeless realm of possibles, but in the temporal series of events. It resists our effort to change it — so far it shows power to last. How long it will last, in what form, we know not yet: but we sense the power to last unchanged *to some degree*. And intellect, reflecting thereon, discovers the category of substance. It comes down to this: originaive means self-originaive and thereby self-constituted, self-maintaining — all of course to a degree. Not, that the self-maintaining power of this physical world, or of your mind or mine, or any other being, was or will be necessarily where it now is. Power may be derived; the power to originate a movement may be bestowed by some other power, a gift, a happy chance. No conclusion is so far warranted as to the specific source of the many powers that be, or as to their specific future. Power might be checked or transformed, reduced from act to potency, etc., — we say only that other power would be needed, to do that. We are but learning from our direct experience of power that it does, in the present order of things, maintain itself somehow — how, when, or where we don't know till we observe it. Physical science has to a high degree, confirmed the natural suggestion that physical power continues as physical power, in the inorganic realm. The law of the conservation of energy says so. There may also be power in minds; mental power may or may not be transformed into physical, and conversely. We find no implication about that, from the mere fact of self-maintenance. It is one thing to know that there is a vast region of powers — which we call the external world — and quite another to locate and define them, and to discover the relations (we call them laws of nature) of these powers to one another.

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## THE STATUS AND NATURE OF ESSENCES

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Definitions :*

An *essence* is a character, an item of content of an entity, or the nature of an entity.<sup>1</sup> The essence of a thing is what the thing partially or completely is; or to use the medieval term, an essence is the 'quiddity' of a thing.<sup>2</sup> The term 'essence' will not designate in this paper, as it did in much of medieval philosophical writing, only generic characters.<sup>3</sup> An essence is any character of a thing whereby that thing is what it is; therefore the accidental and individual traits of a thing, as well as its generic characters, are here considered as essences.

Our definition of essence is very broad; the character of any sort of entity is an essence. Therefore, if we discover that essences themselves are real beings with positive characters, the term 'essence' will be applicable to those characters as truly as it is applicable to the characters of concrete things. We shall, however, classify essences in a hierarchy. *First order essences* are those which characterize or can characterize actual entities. *Second order essences* are those which characterize or can characterize first order essences. And in general, *essences of order n plus 1* are essences which characterize or can characterize *n*th order essences.

The *total essence* of an entity is the nature of the entity as a whole, "the character it has here and now as this unique

<sup>1</sup> cf. "An essence is a meaning, a structure, the character, the nature of an entity, 'what' it is." Paul WEISS, "Being, Essence and Existence" (this *Review*, vol. I, no. 1, p. 69).

<sup>2</sup> "Essence is properly described as that whereby a thing is what it is... As furnishing an answer to the question 'What?' (quid?) essence is equivalent to quiddity." *Catholic Encyclopedia*, "Essence and Existence."

<sup>3</sup> St. Thomas, for example, excludes accidental traits from the concept of essence: "Essence or nature includes only what falls within the definition of the species." — *Summa Theologica*, part I, question 3, article 3.

object."<sup>4</sup> Whereas colloquial vocabulary has names, such as 'circularity', for certain essences which *partially* characterize entities, there is no colloquial name for any *total* essence. We shall, therefore, adopt the convention that the total essence be designated by suffixing "-ness" to the name of the given entity. Thus 'Lincolnness' designates the total essence of the entity Lincoln, and 'roundness-ness' designates the total essence of the entity roundness.

An essence is *actualized* when it occurs as a character of an entity, as a possibility which is pertinent to and focused on by an entity, or as a concept in the mind of some intelligent being. By this definition the essence 'foginess' is actualized when the atmosphere is in fact foggy, when the atmosphere is potentially<sup>5</sup> foggy, or when a meteorologist thinks about fog. Note that there is no necessity, according to the definition of 'actualization' given here, for the entity in which an essence is actualized to be a concrete existent entity. Redness-ness, for example, characterizes redness; redness-ness is therefore actualized in redness, even though redness is not a concrete entity but merely an essence.

#### Program :

An investigation of the nature of essences must attempt to answer four questions : Have essences any independent being ? If so, how are they related to beings more concrete than themselves ? What is their nature *per se* ? Are there relations between essences ? If so, of what sort are these relations ?

Section I, entitled *The Status of Essences*, will attempt to show that essences have real being, but that they are deriv-

<sup>4</sup> Paul WEISS, *ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> Whether there are any real potentialities is a question which cannot be dealt with in this paper. I believe that Aristotle, C. S. Peirce, A. N. Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, and Paul Weiss are correct in arguing that there are potentialities open to actual entities which those entities may or may not realize. The definition of *actualization* stated above does not assert that there are or that there are not such open potentialities. It merely states that, a potentiality, *if there is such a thing*, constitutes an actualization of an essence.

ative from and dependent on beings more concrete than themselves. In this section the following propositions will be defended :

1. Nominalism is inadequate because it cannot account for our consistent and effective employment of abstract terms in discourse.
2. Platonism is an inadequate theory of essences because it is unable to explain how an essence can be actualized.
3. An essence is a real entity, separable from any entity in which it is actualized and capable of actualization in indefinitely many entities. Thus far the Platonists are correct and the nominalists are in error.
4. If an essence is actualized nowhere in the universe, it has no being whatsoever. An essence comes into being when it is first actualized. In asserting that there are unactualized essences the Platonists are in error.
5. An actual entity is more than a mere logical product of the essences which characterize it.

Section II, entitled *Abstract and Concrete Being*, will discuss further the relation of essences to the actual world. In this section the following propositions will be defended :

1. An essence is determinate in that it is self-identical and has definite character, but it is indeterminate in that it may be specified in many ways.
2. The indeterminacy of an essence is not a character of the essence; an essence is indeterminate because it does not prescribe or determine the entities in which it is actualized.
3. Concrete beings are also, though in a different way, indeterminate. For without essences to characterize its internal nature, a concrete being is a characterless "thing-in-itself".
4. Reality must be bivalent. It must be fully and undividedly concrete, and it must be articulate and intelligible.
5. The implicit and unarticulated characters of actual entities are focused on as abstract categories because actual entities are related to each other, because they are in process, and because there are thinking minds which can perform the operation of abstraction.

Section III, *The Content of Essences*, will discuss the nature of essences *per se*, what they are in themselves. In the third section the following propositions will be defended :

1. Since first order essences are real entities, they are themselves characterizable by essences, which we shall call 'second order' essences.
2. These second order essences are in turn real entities which are characterized by third order essences. In this way an infinite hierarchy of essences is generated.
3. Every essence is complex, in the sense that it can be characterized by more than one essence.
4. An essence is an individual in the sense that it is prior to its characterizations and in the sense that it unifies its diverse characters into an undivided whole.

Section IV will discuss *Relations Between Essences*. There are five major ways in which two essences can be related to each other :

- a. *Ingression* — essence A is ingredient in essence B when essence A characterizes essence B.
- b. *Similarity* — essence A is similar to essence B with respect to the character C when C characterizes both A and B.
- c. *Specification* — essence A specifies essence B when A is partially characterized by the total essence of essence B.
- d. *Exclusion* — essence A and essence B exclude each other (exclusion is a symmetric relation) if they are logically opposed.
- e. *Tolerance* — essence A and essence B are tolerant of each other if there is no character of the one that excludes a character of the other.

### I. THE STATUS OF ESSENCES

The thesis which will be defended in this section is that an essence is a real and isolable being, but that it has no status in reality apart from the totality of its actualizations. Both nominalism and extreme realism are denied here in favor of a moderate realism.

*The Inadequacy of Nominalism :*

Nominalism denies that essences have any ontological status. It affirms that there are in reality no beings other than particulars, though the various formulations of nominalism disagree as to what these particulars are. (In Hume's nominalism<sup>6</sup> all particulars are sense data; in Ockham's, the particulars are substances.)<sup>7</sup> Any formulation of nominalism must explain the epistemological circumstance that we do constantly and consistently use terms which have no particular entities as referents. In the attempt to explain this circumstance, nominalism has historically appeared in a great variety of forms. This paper will make no attempt at an exhaustive discussion of these various forms. Instead, it will discuss three varieties of nominalism which seem to be archetypal formulations somewhat simplified, of which the historical varieties of nominalism seem to be elaborations and sophistications.

a. One variety of nominalism explains the apparent reality of abstract essences as the result of reserving information in discourse.<sup>8</sup> This formulation asserts not only that there are no ontological entities corresponding to our abstract concepts, but that these abstract concepts reveal themselves, on analysis, to be nothing but ideas of particulars in disguise. All ideas, according to this theory, are ideas of particulars. Reference can be made to many particulars without specifying each separately, by a psychological act of reservation or hesitancy. Thus, when one entertains the idea 'triangle' one does not entertain an abstract idea of triangles in general, nor of that quality com-

<sup>6</sup> "It has been established as a certain principle, that general or abstract ideas are nothing but individual ones taken in a certain light, and that, in reflecting on any object, 'tis as impossible to exclude from our thought all particular degrees of quantity and quality as from the real nature of things." —HUME. *A Treatise on Human Nature* xiv.

7. Ockham's notion of concrete individuals appears in such statements as "my own first matter is one thing, your first matter is another" — *Summulae I*, 14 (Open Court edition of selections from Ockham, p. 35).

<sup>8</sup> The most famous formulation of this sort of nominalism is, of course, Berkeley's. cf. "And here it must be acknowledged that a man may consider a figure merely as triangular; without attending to the particular qualities of the angles, or relations of the sides. So far may he abstract. But this will never prove that he can frame an abstract, general, inconsistent idea of a triangle." *Principles of Human Knowledge*, section 16.



mon to all triangles. One has triangles of definite dimensions and definite angles in mind. When one articulates an idea by the term 'triangle' rather than by the expression "equilateral triangle with sides one yard long" one is merely withholding or reserving detailed information concerning one's specific idea; or perhaps one is delaying choice among a number of specific ideas of triangles, among them being that of an equilateral triangle with sides one yard long. This formulation of nominalism, however, fails because it cannot account for all the observed facts. There are, in fact, degrees of reservation. In articulating, we are not torn between the alternatives of articulating the complete content of an idea, and of reserving all information about it. There are possibilities of articulation intermediate between articulating a specific idea in all its specificity on the one hand and, on the other hand, giving notice that we have an idea in mind, the content of which we shall not at this moment disclose. The expression 'triangle' is indeterminate in that it does not specify isosceles or scalene triangle, but it is determinate in that it excludes all circles. It is precisely this partial reservation, this intermediate stage of indeterminacy which Berkeley's formulation of nominalism cannot explain. For partial indeterminacy depends on there being a limitation to reservation. What is to provide this limitation in Berkeley's scheme? Certainly not a conceived predicate which is attributable to some ideas and not attributable to others, for the reintroduction of such a predicate would be the reintroduction of abstract ideas. There seems to be only one way, in this type of nominalism, to impose a limitation on reservation or choice among ideas. That way is to specify in advance a specific class of particular ideas to which the reservation or choice or hesitancy is restricted. Hence when one uses the term 'triangle' one reserves information as to which specific idea one has in mind, but one restricts the possibility of reference of the term 'triangle' to a previously designated class of specific ideas. But now we have passed beyond Berkeley's form of nominalism. A general term is no longer an expression of reservation. It now has a referent, that referent being a class of particulars. It is this second form of nominalism that we must examine next.

b. The total meaning of an abstract term might be considered a class of particulars.<sup>9</sup> In this formulation of nominalism an abstract term designates a class of particular entities, whereas a concrete term designates a single particular entity. No abstract entity, in this theory, need be postulated to correspond to an abstract term. We do not apply the abstract term 'white' to an entity because it possesses the character whiteness. Rather we focus on a collection of particular entities; we then designate this aggregate by the term 'whiteness'. Thereafter we may employ the convention that any particular entity belonging to the given aggregate may be called 'white'. This explanation of abstract terms is very convenient for mathematical logic, but it is far too naive to account for other aspects of the use of words. For instance, it cannot explain how we are understood when we use the term 'red flag', even though we do not specify in advance the class of particular entities to which the term 'red flags' is to apply. It cannot explain how we are able to apply abstract terms to concrete particulars which we had not previously encountered. Certainly a sheep the existence of which we were unaware could not have been among those entities which we had previously collected, focused on, and had given the denomination 'sheep'. Nevertheless, we are able to distinguish sheep from goats, and classify them under the abstract terms 'sheep' and 'goat' the very minute we enter a pasture for the first time. It cannot explain the difference which we undoubtedly understand between 'man' and 'featherless biped'. From the standpoint of this variety of nominalism, there can be no difference whatsoever between the meaning of 'man' and the meaning of 'featherless biped'. But somehow we are able to conceive of featherless bipeds that are not men. All these difficulties indicate that this type of nominalism must be discarded and must be replaced by some more adequate semantics.

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<sup>9</sup> One variant of this form of nominalism is Quine's purely syntactical definition of meanings: "The meaning of an expression is the class of those expressions which are synonymous with it." Quine, "Notes on Existence and Necessity", *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 40, pp. 113-127, 1943.

c. Suppose then that the meaning of an abstract term is the class of all *conceivable* particular entities to which the term is applicable.<sup>10,11,12</sup> The referent of an abstract term is not in this view, an abstract entity, but a class of particulars. The circumstance that these particulars may never have come into existence or may have passed out of existence does not alter the fact that they are particulars, unique and unduplicatable entities, which could be actualized in only one way. This formulation of nominalism avoids the obvious difficulties of theory b. sketched above. For instance, it can explain the difference which we feel between men and featherless bipeds. 'Man' and 'featherless biped' do not mean the same thing; for particular animals are *conceivable* which have two legs and no feathers but which are not men in that they do not laugh or reason. However, this formulation of nominalism becomes entangled in worse difficulties than were the formulations considered above. For instance, it is obviously false that when we use an abstract term we *do* have in mind an image of every possible or conceivable particular to which the term would apply. Nor *could* we possibly envisage such an aggregate of conceivably existent particulars; for according to the view of all nominalists (and, in fact all philosophers except the extreme realists), a particular is a unique entity which, when actualized, will be novel and

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<sup>10</sup> This formulation of nominalism would identify the total meaning of a term with what C. I. Lewis calls the *comprehension* of the term; i.e., "The classification of all possible or consistently thinkable things to which the term would be correctly applicable." *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> Though Dewey denies affiliation with any sort of nominalism, his view of the nature of abstractions is remarkably similar to the one indicated above. An abstract term, for him, refers to nothing present and real, but to possible eventualities. Cf. "There is without doubt great abuse of abstractions, but it is to be corrected by noting that their referents are possible modes of operating." *Logic*, p. 352. Since these possible modes of operating are the most concrete of particulars in Dewey's pragmatism, he does reduce universals to classes of particulars.

<sup>12</sup> Bradley dissects this form of nominalism in a passage which I would nominate as the most brilliant *reductio ad absurdum* argument in philosophical literature. *Principles of Logic*, Book I, Chapter VI, § 14-21.

surprising in some respect.<sup>13</sup> But if, when we use the term 'red', we do not envisage each red thing *in concreto*, then by what means do we mark off the class of red things from the class of non-red things? The index which marks off red things from non-red things can only be an abstraction, something recognizable in red things and absent in non-red things. For if we distinguish the class of possible red things from that of non-red things neither by envisaging the class of red things *in concreto*, nor by envisaging an abstract character in red things setting them off from non-red things, we can never in fact distinguish the two classes. The supposition that an abstraction is nothing but a name for a class, however that class may be formed, of particulars, is therefore untenable. Redness is not merely the name of a class; rather, the presence or absence of redness in particulars enables us to separate out the class of red things from the class of non-red things.

Any type of nominalism must explain the fact that we seem to observe characters common to many particular entities, and the fact that in all discourse we use abstract terms effectively. The three varieties of nominalism which we have just considered either fail to account for these two facts (a. and b. fail in this respect) or in accounting for them employ abstract entities implicitly (c. fails in this respect.) Only a formulation of nominalism which falls into neither of these difficulties can convince us that essences are nought but fictions.

Thus far we have criticized nominalism only on epistemological grounds. But there are ontological considerations

<sup>13</sup> Peirce argues, correctly it seems to me, that on a nominalistic view there could be no determination of the future at all, so that every actualization in the future will be entirely novel and surprising: "Nominalists uniformly speak of Aristotle's view of future contingents as really absurd. It may be so; but it is certainly the only doctrine which their principles leave room for. A certain event either will happen or it will not. There is nothing now in existence to constitute the truth of its being about to happen, or of its being about not to happen, unless it be certain circumstances to which only a law or uniformity can lend efficacy. But that law or uniformity, the nominalists say, has no real being; it is only a mental representation. If so, neither the being about to happen nor the being about not to happen has any reality at present; and the most we can say is that the disjunction is true, but neither of the alternatives." C. S. PEIRCE, *Collected Papers*, 6. 368.

which are even more disastrous to nominalism than the epistemological considerations presented previously. Nominalism insists that nothing but particulars are real. Hence it must deny the reality of generic characters; for if two particular entities were to have a character in common, that character would have a being separate from the being of either particular entity. Every character of a particular entity, the nominalist holds, is unique and specific. He would say that 'this redness', not the abstraction 'redness' is a character of this particular entity. But if no generic character can convey the truth about particular entities, then we cannot even characterize a particular entity by applying to it the generic character 'individual'. Even to designate a particular as 'this being' belies its unique and specific nature, for 'this' is a generic character,<sup>14</sup> which we apply to any entity on which our attention is at the time focused. If all real beings are perfectly specific and particular, having no characters in common, then we cannot even say that the world is made up of a number of particular entities, for would not the character 'particular entity' be shared in common by all particular entities? Without some such generic characters as 'this' and 'that', or 'individual' or 'particular entity' there cannot be a plurality of particular entities. A nominalist who denies *all* generic characters, therefore, must say that there is in reality only one being.

The logical conclusion of nominalism is, therefore, absolute idealism, especially Bradley's type of absolute idealism. A nominalist who is honest enough to accept the consequences of his assumptions must assert that the only true reality is the undivided whole of actuality. Bradley himself is the supreme nominalist. It seems strange to find the man who defended the reality of universals so ably in his *Principles of Logic* classified as a nominalist. Bradley defended universals, however, only in the realm of appearances<sup>15</sup>; in the Absolute there are no

<sup>14</sup> cf. Hegel — *The Phenomenology of the Mind*, p. 152 in J. B. Baillie's translation, 1st edition.

<sup>15</sup> "Thus the truth belongs to existence, but it does not as such exist. It is a character which indeed reality possesses, but a character which, as truth and as ideal, has been set loose from existence; and it is never rejoined to it in such a way as to come together singly and *make fact*." *Appearance and Reality*, p. 147.

separate and distinct characters. The Absolute cannot be characterized by any generic character — and this is pure nominalistic doctrine. Nominalism is, therefore, only an immature form of absolute idealism, and absolute idealism (of Bradley's, not Hegel's type) is nominalism carried to the bitter end.

Nominalism fails, therefore, because absolute idealism fails: if the world is a single undivided whole, how can we account the appearance of many different entities, for the variety and plurality which are undeniable aspects of our experience? Protestations that the plurality is but a deceptive appearance of the whole which is the one true reality is vain, for, somehow, the deceptive plurality is more real to us than the undivided Whole.

*The Inadequacy of Platonism :*

Since nominalism seems unable to explain away abstract entities and expel them from the world, we must discover what their status in reality is. The theory of essences antipodal to nominalism is Platonism or extreme realism. An essence, according to the Platonist theory, is an unchanging entity, continuing in being throughout time whether or not it is actualized either as a character or a concept of an actual entity.<sup>16</sup>

The greatest difficulty of extreme realism is how the essences, entities independent of the actual world, can ever enter the actual world as characters of things. We might suppose that an essence enters the actual world by being specified in a novel way. Thus Whitehead says that the 'ingredience' of an eternal object is "the particular mode in which the potentiality of an eternal object is realized in a particular actual entity, contributing to the definiteness of that actual entity."<sup>17</sup> Whitehead's explanation is insufficient because 'the particular mode' in which an eternal object is realized is itself a character of the actual entity in which that eternal object is realized. If

<sup>16</sup> cf. George Santayana, *The Realm of Essence*, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> *Process and Reality*, p. 34; Whitehead uses the term 'eternal object' approximately as the term 'essence' is used in this paper, although of course, his term indicates his belief that characters are eternal, whereas the term 'essence' is non-committal on this point. Elsewhere Whitehead characterizes eternal objects as 'Pure Potentials for the Specific Determination of Fact or Forms of Definiteness.' (*ibid*, p. 32.)



this 'particular mode' is a fresh creation, then the Platonists must admit that some essences are not eternal and are contingent on being actualized in actual entities. On the other hand, if this 'particular mode' is eternal, then how does it enter the actual world? If by a novel specification, then we have to account for a 'particular mode' of a 'particular mode' of the essence with which we started. If we carry Platonism to its logical conclusions we are led to a realm of essences in which the most minute possible specifications of character are eternally represented.

Again we ask the Platonist, How do the essences enter the actual world? He can no longer answer that essences enter the world by being specified in a novel manner, because he has now admitted that all specifications of essences are inhabitants of the realm of essence. He might adopt Hegel's bold rationalism and say that there is nothing other than essences, that reality is nothing but a logical scheme of categories. According to Hegel "the Absolute is the universal and one idea, which, by an act of 'judgment', particularizes itself to the system of specific ideas; which after all are constrained by their nature to come back to the one idea where their truth lies."<sup>18</sup> But Hegel's ruthless rationalism is unsatisfactory. For, if there is nothing other than essences, what can possibly determine which essences should appear in this place and which in that place? Certainly all essences are not actualized simultaneously in every place and every moment; they could not all be actualized together, because some essences — like lightness and darkness — exclude each other. The being which determines that here shall be actualized this and not that essence cannot be another essence, for no essence has the power to make itself or another essence appear before us, or disappear. The actualization of essences, therefore, depends on something other than essences; and since some essences are indeed actualized, the real must be more than a mere concatenation of essences. "That the glory of this world in the end is appearance leaves the world more glorious, if we feel it is a show of some fuller splendour; but the sensuous curtain is a deception and a cheat, if it hides some

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<sup>18</sup> G. W. F. HEGEL, *Logic* (first part of the *Encyclopedia*, section 213).

colourless movement of atoms, some spectral woof of impalpable abstractions, or unearthly ballet of bloodless categories."<sup>19</sup>

Plato himself recognized that there must be something other than essences to explain why some of the essences achieve actualization while others do not. His solution to the problem of how the essences are embodied in the world was the 'Receptacle', a matrix utterly characterless in itself, but infinitely receptive to all essences.<sup>20</sup> This sort of answer has been adopted in some guise by almost every Platonist,<sup>21</sup> and also by many philosophers who do not concur with Plato in making the essences eternal but agree with him in divorcing essences from all actualizations in concrete things.<sup>22</sup> Actuality for Plato is the information of the Receptacle by a set of essences. But if the Receptacle is a vapid characterless spread, how can it give force and vigor and the power of presence to those essences which happen to the embedded in it? If the Receptacle is utterly characterless then it is Nothing and therefore cannot bestow actuality on essences; for to say that some essences become actual because of something which differs in no way from Nothing is merely to say that they are actualized, we know not how. The Receptacle in no way explains actuality; Plato's postulation of it is a confession that he finds an ultimately irrational and unintelligible component in reality: "Wherefore, the mother and receptacle of all created and visible and in any way sensible things, is not to be termed earth, or air, or fire, or water, or any of their compounds or any of the elements from which these are derived, but is an invisible and formless being which receives all things and in some *mysterious* way partakes of the intelligible and is most *incomprehensible*."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> F. H. BRADLEY, *Principles of Logic*, second edition, p. 591.

<sup>20</sup> *Timaeus* 50.

<sup>21</sup> For example, Santayana, *The Realm of Matter* (chapter 2 in particular). Whitehead also has a receptacle, or rather monadic receptacles, as well as the doctrine of specification discussed above, in order to explain the ingression of eternal objects into actuality, see *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 240.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Kant's account of existence as opposed to concepts, *Critique of Pure Reason*, second division, chapter iii, section iv. Cf., also Russell's view of space-time in his *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 163.

<sup>23</sup> *Timaeus* 50.

Platonism, therefore, cannot explain the relation of the essences to actuality. It has another difficulty, in that it is unable to differentiate one unactualized essence from another. All unactualized essences are equally nothing from the standpoint of actuality, and between this nothing and that nothing there is no distinction possible, we cannot even say 'this' and 'that' or make the antithesis 'one' and 'another' between them. The Platonist might answer that unactualized essences do have contents distinct from one another, but that we must await their actualization in order to perceive this difference. True, we reply, we do find differences between two distinct actualized essences, but how do we know that these essences which we now find actualized are those same essences which were utter nothing for us? That which was not previously potential, the Platonist can say, cannot become actual. They were potential, we reply, in the sense that there was nothing preventing their coming to be; potentiality did not belong to the unrealized essences,<sup>24</sup> but to a world inexhaustibly capable of novelty; potentiality could not be pertinent to the essence itself unless that essence were already actual. In what way, we again insist, can an unactualized essence have distinct content? Only in and for itself, it seems, since the unactualized essence is nothing from the standpoint of other entities. To be and to have real content, therefore, an essence must be in a universe of its own without relation to our universe. But two universes cannot co-exist, for by the fact of co-existence, if co-existence is to be meaningful, they must have some contact with and some relation to each other.<sup>25</sup> We can thus find no locus for an unactualized essence, and the realm of "self-enclosed and insulated, ultimate and eternal"<sup>26</sup> essences is a pure fiction.

<sup>24</sup> cf. Charles Hartshorne's essay in the Library of Living Philosophers volume on Santayana, entitled "Santayana's Doctrine of Essence", p. 141: "A determination, prior to coming into existence, was neither possible nor impossible, it was nothing, for there was no such 'it', and only of what in some sense is can anything be predicated, even possibility or impossibility. After being constituted in existence, the 'it' may then have the retrospective relation of absence from antecedent existence, but this relation is external to such existence."

<sup>25</sup> Paul WEISS, *Reality*, p. 172.

<sup>26</sup> SANTAYANA, *Realms of Being*, p. 144.

*Moderate Realism :*

Since neither nominalism nor Platonism can be defended we must adopt a theory of essences intermediate between those two extremes : *An essence must be a real entity, with a being distinct from the being of any of its actualizations; yet the continuance of an essence in being is contingent on its actualization somewhere.* An essence bears only an external relation to each separate actualization (the death of one man does not alter the essence 'humanity'). And since each essence is distinct in being from each of its actualizations, it is detachable from each; this allows an essence to function as a universal characterizing more than one actual entity. On the other hand, an essence definitely bears an internal relation to the whole actual world, even though its relation to any particular entity in the actual world is external. For unless an essence is actualized, it has no status in reality. The mode of actualization is irrelevant to the essence; it may be actualized as a character of one or many actual entities, as a possibility focused on by an actual entity, or as a concept of an intelligent actual entity. But there can be no completely non-actualized essences seeking actualization, or exercising "persuasion" <sup>27</sup> on the non-essential in order to achieve actualization.

A very important corollary of the theory of essence here affirmed is that an actual entity cannot be a mere logical product of its characters. For if an actual entity were a mere logical aggregate of essences, it would be no more concrete than those essences. But we have seen that an essence, in order to be, must be actualized in something more concrete than itself. If every actualization of an essence were merely its "showing up" or "paying a visit" in some aggregate of essences an actualized essence would not really be actualized at all; it would merely be a gadabout, as completely ungrounded in anything more concrete than itself as is an essence that is not actualized at all. Moreover, we may reasonably ask, if actual entities are nothing more than aggregates of essences, how can these aggregates of essences exist? Must we be content with the answer that sometimes, somehow, a group of essences appear together? And what does this *appear* mean? What

<sup>27</sup> WHITEHEAD. *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 241.

differentiates the essences which *appear* from those which do not *appear*? This is the same question with which we confronted the Platonists, and which forced them to admit the reality of something other than essences. An actual entity must be more than its characters, or else those characters could not be assembled together.

## II. ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE BEING

### *The Indeterminacy of Essences :*

We saw in the preceding section that each essence is a real being, and that it therefore possesses a determinate nature. Ending our description at this point, however, would leave something extremely important about essences unsaid : that is, that essences must, in addition to possessing determinate natures, be in some respects indeterminate. The determinate characters of a thing delimit its possible modes of being; a thing is completely determinate when it has only one possible mode of being. But most <sup>28</sup> essences are universals, capable of actualization in varied situations, and hence they appear to have many possible modes of being. An essence must be partially indeterminate to be capable of diverse specifications. The indeterminacy of an essence is indispensable to its functioning as a universal.

What is the nature of the indeterminacy of an essence ? Certainly the indeterminacy of an essence is in no proper sense a character of that essence. An indeterminacy is an omission of specification and a lack of character. It is a lacuna in the nature of an essence. Hence saying that an indeterminacy *belongs* to an essence is as significant as saying that lack of wealth *belongs* to a pauper.

Since the indeterminacy of an essence is not a character of the essence, we cannot say that there is any indeterminacy *within* the essence. The locus of the indeterminacy of an essence is external to the essence. An essence is indeterminate in that it does not determine where and how it must be actualized. The internal being of the essence is perfectly deter-

<sup>28</sup> The exceptional essences that are not universals are the total essences of concrete actual entities. The reason for the singularity of these essences is discussed below.

minate. Redness is identically and unchangeably redness even though redness does not determine which cloaks and which sunsets must be red. The statement at the beginning of this section II, that "...essences are universals, capable of actualization in varied situations, and hence they appear to have many modes of being" is deceptive. An essence in fact has only one mode of being: as an abstract individual entity, the internal nature of which is perfectly fixed and determinate. The nature of an essence is the same however often it is actualized, and however diverse the entities in which it is actualized may be.

The total essences of actual entities appear to be exceptions to the rule that an essence does not determine the precise mode in which it must be actualized.<sup>29</sup> For an actual entity is unique, so that the total essence cannot characterize more than one actual entity. On the other hand, since every essence must have at least one actualization in order to be at all, a total essence must characterize at least one actual entity. Hence the total essence characterizes one and only one entity, and it characterizes that entity precisely. Were we to insist that all essences specify their actualizations in their entirety, we should eliminate all essences except total essences. Every essence would then be a character of only one actual entity, and every actual entity would have only a single character. An extreme nominalism, therefore, is the only alternative to the admission that some essences do not determine the number and precise nature of their actualizations.

Because most essences do not determine the number and precise nature of their actualizations, there is great variation in the number of actualizations diverse essences possess. The essence 'Being', for instance, characterizes every entity in the world, and drenches the world with itself. The essence 'kingship' characterizes only a few entities in the world. The essence

<sup>29</sup> "It may reasonably be held that every individual nature implies existence, and indeed is an existence. By regarding possibilities alone, one can never reach any truly individual character. Individuals and actualization are inseparable by any test, since individuals as such are known only by pointing. Description of contingent things gives always a class quality, unless in the description is included some reference to the space-time world which itself is identified as 'this' world, not by description." Charles HARTSHORNE, *Man's Vision of God*. p. 307.



unicornness is a character of no actual entity, but it has real being as an essence because it is entertained as a concept by some imaginative actual men. The error of the traditional formulations of the ontological argument<sup>30</sup> was to suppose that because the essence 'God' has some sort of actualization that there must in fact be a God which the essence 'God' characterizes; however, entertainment merely as a concept is sufficient actualization to maintain in being the essence 'God'.

An essence must have at least one actualization in order to be, and yet it cannot determine the particular nature of any of its actualizations. Therefore, in one sense the actualizations of an essence are nothing to it, since the number and precise natures of those actualizations do not affect the nature of the essence. (Redness is not affected by the number of red dresses in existence, by their length, or by the material from which they are made). But in another sense the actualizations of an essence are something very positive to the essence, for without *some* actualization or another, the essence would cease to be. The fact that an essence is indeterminate with respect to its actualizations shows that it has both a measure of independence and a measure of dependence. The determinacy of an essence shows that it has a measure of independence, because it shows that an essence remains self-identical despite changes among its actualizations, and that some of its actualizations may perish. But its indeterminacy shows also that the essence is dependent, because the continuance of an essence is contingent on actualizations the nature of which it cannot determine and the permanence of which it cannot guarantee. Each man is mortal, because he personally dies; but the essence 'man' is also mortal,

<sup>30</sup> "Because existence is ingredient in every essence, the 'ontological argument' is always valid and for every being. But because essence and existence are external to one another, we cannot know from a knowledge of the one what the nature of its correlate is, and what being they together constitute. We know, for example, that the essence 'God' exists, but we do not know, just from the fact that it is an essence, whether there is an existence external to that essence, constituting a real God with it, or whether instead there is external to the essence only the existence of our minds which, together with the essence 'God', define an idea of God. To prove God we must go beyond the fact that there is an essence 'God'. Paul WEISS, "Being, Essence, and Existence", this *Review*, vol. I. no. 1, p. 78.

and it will cease to be when all men perish and when the concept 'man' ceases to be entertained in any mind.<sup>31</sup>

In summary, we can characterize the indeterminacy of an essence thus: The indeterminacy of an essence does not affect its inner nature, which is perfectly determinate and self-identical; the indeterminacy of an essence lies in the fact that it does not prescribe the precise nature of those entities, which are external to itself, in which it is actualized. The essence is independent of any *particular* actualization, but it is dependent on its actualizations in that it must be actualized in *some* entity. The indeterminacy of an essence is a sort of incompleteness; it requires something other than itself to complete its being. It resembles a flower petal, which has its fullest being only as part of a flower, even though, when it is detached, it remains self-identically a flower petal.

*The Indeterminacy of Concrete Being:*

There is, therefore, a curious ambiguity in the nature of an essence — it is partially determinate and partially indeterminate, partially dependent and partially independent. This ambiguous state of an essence is paralleled by a somewhat similar ambiguity in concrete beings: Concrete beings *seem* to be totally free from ambiguity. The nature of a concrete entity is specific; a concrete entity has the clarity and immediacy of the 'this-here-and-now'. Consider an actual apple. It is not merely red; it is red with greenish streaks; it is not merely red with greenish streaks, but the greenish streaks have a definite shade; and not only do the streaks have a definite shade of greenness, but they have a definite pattern on the surface of the apple; and so on and on. No description employing only generic characteristics adequately conveys the utter specificity of the apple. The character of the apple is completely specific and completely individual. Actual entities, therefore, seem to be absolutely free from indeterminacy.

<sup>31</sup> It is a profound problem, answerable only after careful investigation in theology, whether every essence, once it has come into being, does not survive in the mind of God. Such is Charles Hartshorne's opinion: "The world memory is sufficiently conscious fully to realize forevermore all past qualities whatsoever." *Man's Vision of God*, p. 268.

This complete specificity of the actual entity, however, instead of expelling indeterminacy for the concrete entity, insidiously reintroduces indeterminacy. The indeterminacy of the concrete entity is of a different sort than the indeterminacy of the essence: the concrete entity is *indeterminate in that its character is unintelligible and completely dissimilar to the character of any other being*. How can the character of a concrete entity be intelligible if, as we saw above, generic characteristics do not convey the true nature of the entity? Doesn't 'intelligibility' mean 'possibility of being classified or put in a category'? And if no generic character adequately characterizes a concrete entity how can it be placed in any categories? For the same reason the concrete entity must be completely dissimilar to any other entity; for the similarity of two entities requires that they have some character in common. But if a concrete entity possesses no generic character, how can it have a character in common with any other entity?

Does the fact that the character of a concrete entity is, as we stated above, "unintelligible and completely dissimilar to the character of any other being" mean that a concrete entity is indeterminate? The answer is, clearly, yes. Because from every standpoint but its own the nature of a concrete entity must be a profound mystery. We cannot know an entity the nature of which is unintelligible; we can only point, and thus indicate the entity as a bare, uncharacterizable 'that'. What could be more indeterminate than a bare 'that'? Each concrete entity, therefore, seems to be an isolated thing-in-itself, which can be characterized properly only by saying — "That concrete entity possesses the character which it does possess." A concrete entity can be described, it seems, only in the way that the God of the Old Testament described Himself: "It is what it is." No abstract character can adequately describe the utterly specific nature of a concrete entity.

The indeterminacy of essences is antipodal to the indeterminacy of concrete entities. An essence is indeterminate because it is abstract, and therefore must be embedded in an entity more concrete than itself in order to have real being. A concrete entity is indeterminate because it is too intensely

concrete, and therefore lacks discursive, abstract and intelligible characters. Both essences and concrete entities are incomplete, but each lacks what the other has. An essence is incomplete because it requires a concrete entity in which to be actualized; but it is intelligible and knowable in its entirety. A concrete entity, on the other hand, is incomplete because it requires abstract characters — which are alien to its utterly specific nature — in order to be intelligible; but it does have concreteness, so that its being is not contingent on the being of anything more concrete than itself.<sup>32</sup> It appears, therefore, that the abstract entity and the concrete entity require each other. Essence without concrete actualization is intelligible but non-existent; concrete being without essence is intensely existent, but irrational.

*The Relation between Abstract and Concrete Being :*

Concrete being and essence require each other, yet they seem so alien to each other that it appears impossible for them to come together. How can an abstract essence be actualized in a concrete being, if the character of a concrete being is utterly unique? We must find some way of explaining how essences can characterize concrete entities, for the world in which we live is neither a world of irrational concreteness, nor is it a world of disembodied essences. Reality is bivalent,<sup>33</sup> it is both intelligible and concrete. Since this bivalence of reality is perhaps the philosophical idea which is most difficult to articulate, almost every writer of philosophy in the past has stressed one aspect of reality — either its concreteness or its intelligibility — and has neglected the other, equally important, aspect of reality. The Platonists have perceived most acutely that reality is intelligible, but

<sup>32</sup> cf. Whitehead's Ontological Principle: "That every condition to which the process of becoming conforms in any particular instance has its reason *either* in the character of some actual entity in the actual world of that concrescence, or in the character of the subject which is in process of concrescence (is the) category of explanation... termed the 'ontological principle'.... This ontological principal means that actual entities are the only reasons." *Process and Reality*, p. 36.

<sup>33</sup> Paul WEISS, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

they have neglected the concrete actuality of the world. The nominalists are aware of the concreteness and intense individuality of things — of the 'haecceitas' of things, to use Duns Scotus' term; but they fail to account for the intelligibility of things, and the fact that things do *somehow* exhibit generic characters.

We cannot overlook either aspect of reality: reality is fully concrete, and yet it has distinct intelligible characters. To assert that reality has both of these aspects seems somewhat paradoxical. But to articulate the truth of things as completely as possible is a higher ideal than to articulate with clarity. Perhaps a philosopher with a great literary genius will some day express the bivalence of reality accurately and without apparent paradox.

There is, however, nothing paradoxical or self-contradictory in reality itself. Abstract essences have concrete actualizations and concrete entities are characterizable by abstract predicates, because any characterization of an actual entity is an explicit focalization on a character already implicit in the actual entity. "What is outside our formal structure can be adequately conceptualized only in the sense that it is conceived as that which is other than the conceived, i.e., as that which is concrete. This does not mean that it is unintelligible or irrational, but that its rationality is so interwoven with its being that it can be had only as content experienced. Specification or exemplification is not a means of reproducing the category in a foreign domain, but of finding a unique situation in which the category is already resident. The content to which the category applies is already categorized."

This quotation from Professor Weiss shows that essences and concrete beings are not in fact alien to each other. But it does not show how the abstract, unspecified essence is related to a concrete being in which it is actualized. For the essence which is implicit in the concrete being is not at all abstract, but is specified with utmost precision. The "category already resident" in the "unique situation" is not the

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<sup>34</sup> Paul WEISS, *Reality*, p. 152.

generic character which is capable of actualization in any other unique situations, but rather one unduplicatable case of that generic character. An essence which is merely *implicit* in a concrete being does not really have status as an essence at all, for an essence is a distinct, intelligible and *explicit* character. There is no such thing as an essence which is merely implicit in a concrete entity, just as there is no such thing as a statue which is uncarved but implicit in the marble. Until the essence is wrenched from its concrete context it has no status as an essence at all. But after it has been thus abstracted from its concrete context we are able to say that *it* — the essence which is now truly and explicitly an essence — was implicit in the context from which it was taken, just as we can say of the statue, *after* it has been carved, that it was implicit in the marble. The marble remains the same whether or not a statue is subsequently carved from it; the concrete being remains the same whether or not a new essence is isolated and thereafter predicated of it. But once the statue has been isolated it is true that the marble contained *it* (even though the *it* was nothing until the statue was carved); and likewise it is true that the concrete being had the nature which the essence now explicitly declares it to have.

Because there is no such thing as an essence which is merely implicit in a concrete being, to say that an essence comes into being when it is *actualized* is not quite accurate; rather we should use a hyphenated term and say that an essence is brought into being when it is *actualized-focalized*. Focalization means 'coming into focus' or 'adjustment for distinct vision'. That an essence, in order to have being, must be focalized is equivalent, therefore, to the fact that an essence must be explicit and distinct. An essence comes into being when it is focused on explicitly as a character of an actual entity or as a concept of a thinking mind. That an essence *A* is actualized-focalized in an actual entity where it was not previously actualized-focalized may mean two things. It may mean that the actual entity itself, since it is a being liable to change, has in fact changed its nature and now is characterizable by *A*, whereas before it was not characterizable by *A*. Or it may mean that, though the actual



entity remains unchanged, a new essence — predicable of that actual entity — has been brought into being by an act of focalization.

Let us consider a case in which a new essence is created by an act of focalization. Suppose there were only one red entity in the world and that there were no thinking minds to probe and examine the nature of this entity. The shade of this entity would be perfectly definite, because this hypothetical red thing would be a concrete entity. Suppose the shade of this one red entity is the shade which we recognize as crimson. It would be incorrect, however, to say that this hypothetical entity possessed both the essences redness and crimsonness, for if there were only one red entity in our hypothetical world, crimsonness and redness would be indistinguishable. We can distinguish redness and crimsonness in our hypothetical world only by smuggling into that hypothetical world sophisticated distinctions which are possible only when several shades of redness are contrasted. Hence, to be as accurate as possible, we should not say that the color of the entity under consideration is red, and its shade is crimson, but rather that its color is red-crimson. Now suppose that there comes to be in our hypothetical world another red entity, in this case a vermillion-red entity. Now we can properly say that the essence redness and the essence crimsonness both characterize the entity which we formerly characterized only by the single essence crimson-redness. For the contrast with the vermillion entity has brought into focus the redness as being common to both the crimson and the vermillion thing, and it has brought into focus the crimsonness, as being other than vermillionness. The entity that was previously characterized only by crimson-red is not changed because now it has the two characters redness and crimsonness. Its nature is the same, but what was formerly implicit and inarticulate in its nature has now become explicit and distinct. There are *now* two essences in our hypothetical world whereas previously there was but one.

There is no limit to the number of new essences that can be brought into being by acts of focalization on a single actual entity. When we first confront an actual entity it may seem

to be characterized only by 'thisness' and 'being' and 'individuality'. But since any actual entity has a perfectly specific nature, repeated contrasts, analyses, speculations and dissections must focus on aspects of this specific nature. Such focalizations bring into being explicit characters which are predicable of the actual entity. To be sure, many of these essences were in being previously to their actualization-focalization in this particular actual entity. No matter how novel or unusual an entity may be, it can always be characterized *partially* by essences which are actualized elsewhere. If this were not the case it would have nothing in common with other entities, and would therefore be a universe off to itself — which is impossible, because two universes cannot co-exist.<sup>35</sup> But repeated focalizations are certain to bring into being essences which were never actualized-focalized elsewhere. If this were not the case, then an individual actual entity would be completely duplicatable, for every single essence which could be brought into being as its character could equally well be the character of another actual entity.

Now, perhaps, it is somewhat clearer how reality can be both fully concrete and thoroughly intelligible. *Concreteness and intelligibility are not irrevocably opposed.* That an actual entity is more than the mere aggregate of the essences characterizing it does not imply that it contains some irrational formless factor such as the Receptacle or prime matter. The primary attribute of concreteness is infinite capacity for being characterized, not utter exclusion of character. Our failure to exhaust actual entities by listing their characters ought not be attributed to the dulness of our vision or the casualness of our scrutiny. It is due rather to the ontological fact that essences do not have being prior to their actualization-focalization. Hence, however minutely an actual entity is described, it is not exhausted by essences which already have being, for new essences predicable of it can always be brought into being by subsequent acts of focalization.

Essences are brought into being by being actualized-focalized. The relation of actualization-focalization is the

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<sup>35</sup> cf. p. 51.

crucial relation between abstract and concrete being — the relation which allows concrete being to have characters, and abstract beings to be real. But how is actualization-focalization possible? We may give as a general answer that actualization-focalization is possible because reality is not monistic. Were there but one undivided unchanging being in the universe then there could be no actualization-focalization. To focus is to concentrate on a part or an aspect which is less than the whole. If reality is an undivided whole, where is the part or the aspect on which one can focus? Bradley is right when he says that no character<sup>36</sup> can be truly predicated of the Absolute. Predication of a character is a focalization on one aspect of a thing, but if the Absolute is completely without divisions it has no aspects to which focalization may be directed.

But reality is not monistic. Multiplicity and change are everywhere evident; and what naive common sense recognizes, our sophisticated philosophical thought must ultimately take account of. The two primary ontological facts which make actualization-focalization possible are plurality and process:

1. Plurality makes actualization-focalization possible in several ways. First, the bare co-existence of a multiplicity of actual entities presupposes that they all have some primitive characters in common. For instance all must have 'being' in common, all must have 'individuality', spatial extension, and temporal duration in common. Hence the existence of other actual entities points up, that is to say focalizes, such fundamental aspects of an actual entity as its individuality and its spatio-temporal character. Secondly, there are relations between actual entities of a more particular and specialized nature than mere co-existence, and such relations allow many sorts of focalization. For instance, when a piece of bread is given to a hungry man, he is not interested in the fact that the piece of bread is a concrete, unique and unduplicatable actual entity; he is interested only in its aspect of being nourishing food for human beings. Hence the relation between a hungry man and a piece of bread allows a focalization on the bread's implicit nature as nourishing food. This focalization brings into being

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<sup>36</sup> *Appearance and Reality*, p. 147.

an explicit essence which is predicable of the bread — the essence 'edibility'. Since almost every relation between two actual entities involves only the partial natures of the actual entities, the relation brings about a focalization of aspects of those entities.

2. Process makes actualization-focalization possible by creating contrasts. The change in the actual world from one moment to the next is not a complete change (for this would make the temporal continuity of the world inexplicable<sup>37</sup>) but rather a change with respect to certain aspects of the world. The contrast between certain aspects of actuality at one moment and certain aspects of actuality at a previous moment focalizes these aspects. Thus the succession of daylight by night focalizes the aspect of 'being light' in the world in day and the aspect of 'being dark' in the world at night. In this way the essences 'lightness' and 'darkness' are brought into being. Process makes actualization-focalization possible in a second way: not only are aspects of present and past actuality focalized by contrast with each other, but aspects of the present are focalized by contrast with future possibilities. For instance, the possibility that a child will attain the physical stature of a man focalizes the present aspect of spatial extension in the child.<sup>38</sup>

Plurality and process guarantee that aspects of actual entities will be focused on and made explicit. Essences will be actualized-focalized in the world so long as there is either process or plurality. Hence essences can have being whether or not there are intelligent minds which can entertain abstract essences as concepts. However, the existence of intelligent minds provides a third way in which essences can be actualized-focal-

<sup>37</sup> Paul WEISS, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-169.

<sup>38</sup> Future possibilities can focalize aspects of the present being of an actuality only if the future possibilities are in some way factors of the present being of the actual entity. In other words, the discussion above assumes that the future is operative in the present, that there are final causes. The assumption that there are final causes can be justified only by an examination of the problems of time and causation, which are beyond the scope of this paper. But since I believe the case for teleology can be made out — (see Paul Weiss' *Nature and Man*, p. 53 ff.) — I feel that the discussion of the various modes of focalization would be incomplete if the focalization of aspects of the present by the future were not mentioned.

ized. Actualization-focalization of essences by being entertained in intelligent minds is, in fact, a mode of actualization-focalization by plurality. For every act of knowing or conceiving presupposes at least two entities — a knower and a known, a conceiver and a conceived.<sup>39</sup> Even so-called 'self-knowledge' presupposes a distinction within the self of that which is known from that which knows. Though actualization-focalization due to acts of mind is only a special case of actualization-focalization due to the co-existence of a plurality of entities, it is a very important special case.

Minds actualize-focalize essences in two ways: First, minds are able to analyze actual entities. Analysis is not the dissection of a concrete and specific individual into lifeless abstract characters; it is rather the act of making explicit aspects of the entity under analysis which previously had been implicit. Analysis focalizes abstract essences, but it predicates those abstract essences of the concrete context from which they were abstracted. If analysis were not performed against the background of an unanalyzed, then we could not know that there was anything being analyzed; we would have no more than a set of abstractions in mind, characterizing nothing more concrete than themselves.<sup>40</sup> Analysis therefore has two components: the first is the focalization of an aspect implicit in the entity, thus bringing into being an explicit essence; and the second is the attribution of an essence to the actual entity out of which it was abstracted. Analysis has the double function of actualizing-focalizing essences and of predicating these essences of actual entities.

Intelligent minds are able to actualize-focalize an essence in a second way: by entertaining an essence as a concept

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<sup>39</sup> cf. PLATO, *The Sophist*, 238, where Plato demonstrates that no knowledge is possible if there is but one being.

<sup>40</sup> cf. "Contemplation is the act of grasping an idea, a meaning, a general character of something. But if we merely contemplated we would be lost in a reverie so deep that we could neither find nor distinguish ourselves, or the objects in it, from anything else. ...There can be no articulate perceptual knowledge unless the contemplated be integrated with a subject and related beyond itself in something less abstract." — Paul WEISS, *Reality*, p. 64.

without predicating it of any concrete entity. A mind does this when it exercises imagination or engages in abstract thought. Some of the essences actualized-focalized in an imaginative or speculative mind may, of course, have been first brought to mind in an act of analysis. Redness, for instance, can be conceived without being predicated of any particular entity, but it was first brought to mind by the experience of red things. But the mind, in its creative flights, is able to actualize essences that characterize no actual entity: an inspiration for a new sonata, a plan of a theorem, an idea for a new heroine — are all conceptual actualizations of essences which were never previously actualized, and which, perhaps, will never in the future be the characters of actual entities. It must be remembered, however, that the conceptual actualization of an essence is a true actualization of the essence in something more concrete than itself. An essence which is merely conceived is not a disembodied essence; it is actualized as an abstract idea rather than as a character of an entity, but it is actualized.

In summary we can say that essences and concrete being supplement each other. Essences are explicit articulations of the characters of things, and actual entities are the ground and source for essences. Were reality a single undivided Being, there would be no explicit essences. But plurality, process, and intelligence make explicit what is merely implicit in concrete beings, and thereby bring essences into being by acts of actualization-focalization.

### III. THE CONTENT OF ESSENCES

The discussion of the status of essences has led us to the conclusion that essences are real, though abstract, entities. An essence, being real, therefore has a unique nature or character. Since we have defined any character to be an essence, the character of an essence is itself an essence, and the various components of this character, if it can be analyzed into distinct components, are also essences. Several questions suggest themselves: Is there any second order essence — i.e. an essence of an essence — that is not also the essence of some actual entity? Are second order essences in turn characterizable by



third-order essence, and they in turn by fourth order essences, and so on without end? Is an essence simple, in the sense that it can be characterized by one and only one higher order essence, or can it be characterized by many higher order essences? Do  $n$  plus 1 th order essences characterize  $n$ th order essences in the same manner that first order essences characterize concrete entities?

*Second Order Essences :*

a. The answer to the first question seems clearly to be yes. That character, for instance, which makes redness different from blueness is a second order essence. It cannot be the character of any actual entity, because it is a character which contributes to an abstraction; it makes an essence one kind of a '-ness' rather than another kind of '-ness.' Whatever characterizes a concrete actual entity must contribute to its concrete actuality. Hence that second order essence which differentiates redness from blueness cannot be, in addition, a first order essence. C. I. Lewis, however, denies the being of any essences other than first order essences. The character of roundness which makes roundness what it is, in Lewis' analysis, is nothing other than roundness itself.<sup>41</sup> This seems to mean that roundness is round, which is an absurdity. Only round things are

<sup>41</sup> "Question arises whether abstract terms signify as well as denote; and if so, what the signification of an abstract term will be. Is there some property whose presence is essential in order that 'roundness' or 'redness' should apply? Plainly, there is; and this property is simply roundness or redness itself. When roundness is presented, both 'round' and 'roundness' apply correctly: the difference is that 'round' applies to the individual object characterized by roundness, whereas 'roundness' names this property itself and has no other application." — C. I. LEWIS, *An Analysis of Meaning and Valuation*, p. 42.

Charles A. Baylis criticizes Lewis on this point thus: "Lewis chooses to say that abstract terms, such as redness *signify* what they *denote*. This treatment is in contrast to such a one as proposed by Alonzo Church... in which care is taken that what is signified by any term be on a higher type level than what is denote by it. According to such a system what is denoted by a term is always a member of the class determined by the concept signified by that term. Such a treatment conforms to the theory of types, whereas Lewis' appears to violate it." — *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. viii, no. 1, p. 157.

round, that is, have the predicate 'round.' Roundness is an abstract entity and therefore has no spatial qualities at all. The property distinctive of any entity to which the term 'roundness' might apply is roundness-ness. We have no less clumsy mode in the English language for expressing many such essences. But unfamiliarity of expression is no criterion for denying the reality of the thing expressed. There are many entities which have the property roundness-ness. Roundness-ness certainly is attributable to circularity and to sphericity, in so far as round is an attribute of circles and spheres.

*The Hierarchy of Essences :*

b. The answer to the second question must also be yes. Second-order essences are characterizable by third-order essences, and so on without end. For second-order essences are characters which make first-order essences what they are. Second-order essences therefore have the status of real beings. Whatever is, must be in terms of some definite character. This is a statement that no one would attempt to refute when applied to actual entities, but which one might begin to doubt in the rarefied atmosphere of higher-order essences. It is certainly true in general, however : A qualitative difference can only be due to a difference of character;<sup>42</sup> that which is, is different from sheer non-being. But non-being is that to which no determinate character applies; hence anything that is must have some definite character. Thus second-order essences must be characterizable by essences of some sort. And these third-order essences must be characterizable by fourth-order essences, and so on without end. Thus the realm of essences is a hierarchy; with an infinite number of orders.

*The Complexity of Essences :*

c. The third question asks after the number of essences of order  $n$ -plus-one which characterize an essence of  $n$ th order. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that an essence can

<sup>42</sup> "It is incontestable that difference from anything is determination in respect to being or not being that thing. A monkey, in differing from a man, is determined (negatively) in respect to humanity. Difference, then, in any respect, is determination in that respect." C. S. PEIRCE, *Collected Papers*, 6. 623.

be characterized by only one character. Essences, after all, are much less rich than actual entities; they lack life and concreteness, and they therefore have fewer facets than actual entities have. Moreover, an essence is static, free from all the stresses and tensions to which an actual entity, because of the multiplicity of its components, is subjected. The serenity of essences could be interpreted as a sign of their complete simplicity, their freedom from any divisions or rifts.<sup>43</sup> According to this speculation an essence is merely what it is, and can be characterized only by its total essence.

This supposition cannot be valid; if an essence is merely what it is, it is indistinguishable from Nothing. To show that no real essence can be utterly simple, we must first note that a simple essence has no component in common with any other entity in the world. A shared component would induce a schism in the absolute simplicity of an essence. For instance, if redness had a character in common with blueness it would also have to possess a character differentiating it from blueness. Redness would then be characterizable by two distinct essences, contrary to our hypothesis that it is utterly simple. Hence an utterly simple essence has no component in common with any other entity. From the standpoint of every other entity in the world a simple essence would be an absolute other, an indicated 'that' possessing only bare self-identity. But wherein, then, would the aforesaid essence differ from Nothing? *Nothing* is precisely that which is the absolute other of every entity which confronts it.<sup>44</sup> Thus from the standpoint of every entity in the world other than itself, the given essence is identical with Noth-

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<sup>43</sup> This is Santayana's supposition: "As a thing is not a compound of its appearances, so an essence is not a compound of the terms into which it may be analyzed. Analysis yields something specifically different from the object that justifies the analysis: an essence never is any description of it. Essences have no origin, and in that sense no constituents." *The Realm of Essence*, p. 89.

<sup>44</sup> The idea of Nothing is the idea of the "suppression of everything" or the "annihilation of everything." Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, chapter 4. Bergson denies that there is a possible Nothing or a possible Idea of Nothing. But this belief, in which I concur, does not affect the discussion above, which reasons that an absolutely simple essence would have the same status as Nothing, and therefore would be impossible if Nothing is impossible.

ing. It can be other than Nothing only from its own standpoint. Thus it would form a little universe of its own. But *to be* means to be part of our public common universe. Two univeses cannot co-exist, because by the very act of co-existing they supplement each other to form one *uni*-verse. The supposition that an essence is absolutely simple thus perishes in absurdities. We must conclude that if an essence has any real status in the world, it is complex and related to other entities.

If an essence *p* has other characters than *p*-ness what are these other characters? We can best designate the totality of characters in the content of an essence thus: if an *n*th order essence is a specification of a second *n*th order essence, then it is characterized by the total essence of that second *n*th order essence. For instance, the first order essence 'felineity' is a specification of a host of first order essences, among them being 'four-leggedness', 'furriness', 'animateness', and 'carnivorousness'. Each of these four generic essences, of which felineity is a specification, is a first order essence in that each characterizes actual entities. Now the total essences of these four characters are respectively 'four-leggedness-ness', 'furriness-ness', 'animateness-ness', and 'carnivorousness-ness'. Each of these four second order essences is an attribute of felineity. Felineity, the total essence of the normal cat, must possess each of these characters and more besides. The terminology is gauche, but it is accurate, and it enables us to see how we may predicate a multiplicity of characters of an essence.

#### *The Individuality of Essences:*

d. Finally we must consider the question of whether essences of order *n*-plus-one are related to *n*th order essences in the same fashion that first order essences are related to concrete entities. The question is ambiguous but provocative, and actually requires several answers.

Because a first order essence can be related to a concrete actual entity in ways that essences of order *n*-plus-one cannot be related to *n*th order essences, we must answer no to inquiry d. A first order essence may be related to an actual entity as a character of that entity. It may also be related to the actual entity as a potentiality or anticipation of that entity, and, final-

ly, it may be related as a conception of the entity. Essences of order higher than one can be related to essences of lower order only in the first of these three ways, by being characters of the essences to which they are related. Essences have no potentialities, since they cannot change. Therefore they cannot focus on a range of possible future characterizations of themselves in the way that a man does when he faces the future. Nor do essences have minds; hence they cannot apprehend higher order essences by imagining or remembering or in any way conceiving of them. Essences are static. They can have adventures only by being related to actual entities in dramatic process. And higher order essences are all the more static, in that they are merely characterizations of other static entities. Thus the modes in which essences of order  $n$ -plus-one are related to  $n$ th order essences are limited in comparison with the modes in which first order essences are related to actual entities.

There is, however, a sense in which we can answer question d in the affirmative: *just as is an actual entity is not a mere logical product of the first order essences which characterize it, so an  $n$ th order essence is not a mere logical product of the essences which characterize it.*

If essences were no more than aggregates of their own characters, then an actual entity could never be characterized at all. For each of the characters of an essence would itself be no more than an aggregate of higher order essences, and each of these higher order essences would be a mere aggregate of still higher order essences. Therefore, unless there is a way in which an essence can function as a character without explicit reference to its own characters there can be no characterization. An essence must, for this reason, be something more than the aggregate of its characters; it must be an individual prior to its characters in the same way that an actual entity is prior to its characters. An essence is not what it is because it is compounded of certain characters; rather because it is what it is those characters are abstractable from it.<sup>45</sup> We

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<sup>45</sup> cf. Paul WEISS, *Reality*, p. 176-177.

can accurately characterize actual entities by first order essences; if we desire, we can then probe these first order essences and discover second order essences which characterize them in turn. But we need not know these second order essences in order to make an intelligible analysis of the actual entity. The second order essence *per se* is not relevant to the actual entity, since, when the first order essence functions as an individual whole, characterizing the actual entity, the second order essence has no independent being. It is *created*, not discovered, by being focused on in that first order essence, just as the first order essence was created by being focused on in the actual entity which it characterizes. An *n*th order essence is prior to, not dependent on, the essences of order *n* plus one which characterize it. Thus the individuality of essences explains why characterizations need not trail off into an infinite regress of further characterizations.

What is the source of the individuality of an essence? The individuating principle cannot be simply another essence, such as the essence 'individuality' or the essence 'solidarity' or 'concreteness'. The individuality of an essence is a fact which nothing less concrete than the essence itself can justify. An individuating principle could not individuate. It would merely lie alongside the other components of the essence, and would require some further force to fuse it with these other components.<sup>46</sup> The fact that an essence is real is, as we have seen, contingent. But because it is real, the essence is what it is. It cannot owe this individuality to any component within it, because this component would not be *within it* in any sense unless the essence as a whole integrated that component into itself. The essence must therefore be an individual and a whole prior to its possession of any discursive components, in particular, prior to its possession of an individuating component.

Even though there is no component abstractable from an essence which makes that essence an individual, we nevertheless can recognize that it is an individual. Our criterion lies in the manner in which we can, and ultimately must, approach the

<sup>46</sup> cf. *ibid.*, p. 177.



essence. An individual essence can be apprehended as a whole, without recourse to a discursive analysis of it. We can grasp the essence felinity by considering that felinity is characterized by furriness-ness. If curiosity prompts us to analyze felinity further, we find that furriness-ness, carnivorousness-ness and other essences are predicable of it. But felinity is sufficient unto itself, not in the sense that it has being independently of its actualizations, but in the sense that it is knowable without analysis.

Not only *can* we grasp an individual essence as a whole, but ultimately, if we wish to know it as it is, we *must* grasp it as a whole in which its characters have lost their separate identity. The furriness-ness and the carnivorousness-ness characteristic of felinity are not furriness-ness and carnivorousness-ness in general, for, after all, a cat can only have a cat's kind of fur, and its appetite for animal flesh is a cat's fastidious appetite. We cannot compact felinity by adding the character furriness-ness to the character carnivorousness-ness, etc. We can at best approximate felinity by merging feline-furriness-ness and feline-carnivorousness-ness, etc. Hence the components of the essence felinity can be reassembled to form the whole essence only if each separate component is referred to and modified by the whole essence as undivided. Analysis which does not preserve the thing analyzed as a constant background will belie the nature of that thing.

Since the characters of an essence must be referred to and qualified by the whole essence, the various characters, as they enter the essence, must be infected by each other.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, the essences that characterize an actual entity interpenetrate each other, since, as we have been, the actual entity is an individual which is more than a simple aggregate of its characters. The felinity of a concrete black cat is a black-felinity and the blackness of the cat is a feline-blackness. Both concrete actual entities and essences are individuals. But actual entities are ultimate individuals in the sense that they never lose their individual identity by being embedded in something more concrete than themselves. Any essence is an individual just so long as it

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<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p. 180.

is focalized and held apart from its actualization. As actualized it is merged with and distinguishable from all the characters of the entity in which it is actualized. The felinity of a black cat is not an individual character somehow adhering to the black cat; it is lost in the cat. But that felinity may be abstracted out of the cat and held apart from the cat; when this is done felinity is itself an individual.

#### IV. RELATIONS BETWEEN ESSENCES

There are five major types of relation between essences which deserve special recognition. They are :

1. Ingression<sup>48</sup> — the relation which an essence of order  $n$  plus one bears to an  $n$ th order essence which it characterizes.
2. Similarity — the relation between two essences, both of which are characterized by the same essences.
3. Specification — the relation which one  $n$ th order essence bears to a second  $n$ th order essence if the total essence of the first is a partial characterization of the second.
4. Exclusion — the relation between two essences, each of which has a character that is the contradictory of a character of the other.
5. Tolerance — the relation between two essences which have no contradictory essences.

1. Since it has a definite nature, every essence has definite characters. Each of these characters is 'ingredient' in the given essence, and its relation to that essence may be called 'ingression'. Ingression, however, does not only contribute to the definiteness of the essence characterized, but it specifies and qualifies the ingredient essence. Redness-ness helps define crimsonness, but also, as ingredient in crimsonness, redness-ness becomes the specific redness-ness which is peculiar to crimsonness.

Because the redness-ness ingredient in crimsonness is a specified redness-ness, it might be reasonable to suppose that crimson-ness is not related to the essence redness-ness at all, but rather to a more specific essence which we might best

<sup>48</sup> WHITEHEAD, *Process and Reality*, p. 34.

call 'crimsoned-redness-ness'. If this supposition were true,<sup>49</sup> then an essence would not be related to anything but the components of its own content. It could not have characters in common with other essences, because it would specify all its own characters in such a unique fashion that they could be actualized nowhere but in itself. This supposition is a sort of nominalism, applied, however, to first order essences instead of to actual entities. There is a certain measure of truth in the supposition that an essence is related only to its components as they are synthesized within itself. For, as we have seen, from the narrowly limited standpoint of an essence, all other essences and all specifications of itself are nothing. Therefore, from its own standpoint, an essence can be related only to itself and its content. If we consider only the determinate content of an essence, the relation of ingression does not relate that essence to a character over and against itself, but to a component already enveloped within itself.

Ingression can be a relation between essences different from each other and over against each other only because essences have indeterminacies as well as determinate content. Redness-ness is ingredient in crimson-ness because it is indeterminate and can be specified as a crimsoned-redness-ness without betraying its self-identity. And crimsonness allows the ingression of redness-ness because crimsonness is free to specify that redness-ness in its own peculiar way.

The relation of ingression, therefore, involves both determinacies and indeterminacies of essences. Redness-ness is ingredient in crimsonness, because crimsonness has the *determinate* character redness-ness while redness-ness is *indeterminate* as to which shade of redness it may enter.

2. Once we have seen that the indeterminacies of essence are involved in the relation of ingression, the relation of simi-

<sup>49</sup> This is Santayana's supposition, the logical conclusion of which is that essences cannot be related to each other: cf. "I have said that logical implication is explicit inclusion of a part in a whole; but what is inclusion? When one essence is said to include another, an identification there is something non-logical, not to say absurd..... Identification is approximate only, and therefore inclusion is fictitious." SANTAYANA, *Realm of Essence*, p. 88.

larity presents no special difficulties. The indeterminacy of an essence enables it to be actualized in indefinitely many different ways. Hence an essence of order higher than the first can characterize two different essences. Though each essence thus characterized embodies their common character in a different manner, the character nevertheless remains a predicate of both, wherein their similarity lies.

In most cases the relation of similarity is an external relation. (The exceptional cases are those in which one essence is not only similar to the other, but is a specification of it; we shall consider the relation of specification below.) From our knowledge of one actualization of an essence we cannot discover its mode of specification in another actualization. Indeed we do not even know from our knowledge of one actualization that there is another actualization, since an essence has being so long as it has at least one actualization. To discover that two essences are similar it is necessary to probe both separately until a common character is revealed.

3. The relation of specification is a subcase of the relation of similarity. For one essence is a specification of a second essence if the total essence of the second is a partial characterization of the first. Since this total essence is a character common to both of them, they are similar.

In a relation of specification, the more specific is internally related to the more generic essence. If we have knowledge of squareness we know that it is characterized by rectangularity. The essence of which rectangularity is the total essence must be real, since it is actualized whenever squareness is actualized. From a knowledge of squareness, then, we know the generic essence rectangularity. As in the general case of similarity, however, a knowledge of the generic rectangularity will not enable us to discover squareness.

It is interesting to inquire 'what is there in the generic essence that is lacking in its specification, and if there is nothing in the generic which the specification does not possess, how can the generic be a separate real being?' We might be tempted to answer that the generic is characterized by 'sheerness' or 'purity' whereas the specification is not. But such an explanation fails for two reasons: First, if, for example, redness possessed

the determinate character 'sheerness' then all its specifications must possess sheerness, since, by definition the specification is characterized by the *total* essence of the generic. And, second, sheerness and purity are in fact characteristics of every entity, in so far as each entity is identically and unambiguously itself; hence redness is no more sheer than crimsonness.

The specification lacks, therefore, no determinate character of the generic essence. What it does lack is part of the indeterminacy of the generic essence. Were the indeterminacy of an essence no more than a blank or a lacuna, then asserting that the specification lacks part of the indeterminacy would mean that in fact the specification lacks nothing of, and therefore contains, the generic essence. But the indeterminacy of an essence is more than nothing. It is the possibility of the essence for actualization in multiple ways. The less specific is the content of an essence, the more extensive is the range of possible actualizations of the essence. Whatever a specification of a generic essence gains in determinateness of content, it loses in its range of possible actualizations.

4. Two essences exclude each other when one has a character which is the contrary of a character of the other. For instance, circularity and squareness exclude each other, for the essence curvilinearity-ness which characterizes circularity is the contrary of the essence rectilinearity-ness which characterizes squareness.

If two essences exclude each other, there can be no essence which is a specification of both. There cannot be, for instance, an essence 'round-squareness', which is a specification both of roundness and of squareness. For an essence, like every other individual being, cannot have contradictory components. Hence not only is it impossible for round squares to exist, but it is equally impossible to have in mind the concept of round-squareness, for we can entertain an essence as a concept only if there is such an essence. When we try to conceive of round-squareness we juxtapose the essences roundness and squareness, we compare them, contrast them, and find that they exclude each other. Every attempt we make to conceive of roundness and squareness as components of a single essence 'round-squareness' must be frustrated. If each essence were no

more than an aggregate of actual entities, then round-square-ness would be a real essence; it would be the essence identical with the null class. But we saw in our discussion of nominalism that an essence is more than an aggregate of actual entities. It is an individual character, a real but not a concrete being. The components of every being, whether it is abstract or concrete, must be compatible with each other; otherwise the being could not be a unified individual. Hence 'round-squareness' is not the name of any essence, and to suppose that 'round-squareness' has a single designatum is to be deceived by one's use of words.

5. If two essences do not exclude each other, then they may be said to bear the relation of *tolerance* to each other. Redness and smoothness, for instance, are tolerant to each other, because neither has a character which is the contradictory of a character of the other. Two tolerant essences may be actualized in the same entity — as redness and smoothness are actualized in a rose. Two tolerant essences may also be specified by a single essence. Thus the tolerant essences roundness and three-dimensionality are both specified by the essence sphericity. There is, of course, no necessity that two tolerant essences ever be specified by the same essence: for instance, the essence hippopotamus-ness and the essence polyphonic do not exclude each other, yet it seems difficult to conceive of an essence which was a specification of both.

However difficult it would be to conceive of an essence which is a specification of both hippopotamus-ness and polyphonic, it is not impossible. Essences bear the relation of tolerance to each other only when they *may* both be specified by a single essence. A poet often conceives of an essence which specifies both of a pair of quite alien essences. Consider, for instance, "Tiger, tiger, burning bright", from Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. The essences 'tigerness' and 'brightly burning' do not exclude each other, but they are so alien that no essence that contains both as components seems conceivable. Yet there is no doubt, by the end of the poem, that Blake has not merely juxtaposed the ideas 'tigerness' and 'brightly burning', but that he has conceptually created the essence 'brightly-burning tigerness'. A person with sensitivity to the poem will conceptually actualize this complex essence upon reading the



poem. And there is no doubt that the essence 'brightly-burning tigerness' is not a mere juxtaposition of two simpler essences, but that it is an individual essence which specifies both 'tigerness' and 'brightly-burning' and in which those two essences are fused. 'Tigerness' and 'brightly-burning' may, to be sure, be abstracted out of 'brightly-burning tigerness', but only at the price of destroying the emotional and intellectual coherence of the poem.

The example above from Blake shows how metaphor provides a specification for essences which tolerate each other, but which are alien to each other. Metaphor is not a juxtaposition of essences; it is a conceptual creation of a new essence which contains previous alien essences as components. One does not create a new essence merely by thinking hippopotamusness and polyphonic at the same time. But if one could entertain a conception in which the hippopotamus-ness infected the polyphony and the polyphony infected the hippopotamusness in such a way that separating these two essences would destroy the unity of the conception, then one would have created a new essence which contains both hippopotamus-ness and polyphonic as components.

The subject matter of art is unlimited in the sense that an artist can combine any two non-exclusive or tolerant essences, thereby creating novel essences. But the mode in which he creates new essences cannot be determined by the essences which are separate prior to their conceptual combination and specification by the artist. Essences are static; the creative act must proceed from the imagination of the artist. But the fact that all tolerant essences *can* be combined and specified in new essences shows that the possibilities in the world for novelty are inexhaustible.

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## EXISTENTIALISM OLD AND NEW

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The different papers and discussions included within this volume are focused on the problem of existence. This problem now faces all schools of philosophy, as a result of the recent, anti-rationalist revolt against the intellectualistic bias of post-Cartesian philosophy. Concepts are universal, changeless, and determinate. Instead of using these tools for the cognition of an existent world as it really is, the new way of ideas chose rather to regard these tools as an ultimate criterion for reality, and to disregard everything that could not be clearly and distinctly conceptualized. Matter was discarded as a meaningless surd. The finite, material individual was absorbed into great monistic systems. Time and change were denied as contradictory. Chance and freedom, every expression of indeterminacy, were negated in vast frameworks of conceptual necessity which made their influence felt in the scientific thought of the last century.

Even the so-called empiricists, though they rejected an extreme rationalization of reality, nevertheless performed an analogous operation, replacing the object of reason by the object of sense. Reality thus became sensation, or sense impression, rather than concept. The individual substance was interpreted as a cluster of sense data, and change as the mere succession of impressions. This noetic etherealization of existence, however, was soon subjected to attack by a number of critics, resolved to follow the concrete facts of existence, irrespective of their agreement or disagreement with the apparent structure of human cognition.

Thus in the middle of the last century, Kierkegaard subjected the universalized concrete of Hegel to a masterful criticism, which called attention to the incommunicable, contingent existence of the human individual. In spite of the difficulty of fitting him into a system of timeless essences, it is this individual who actually exists in the concrete. Later, Bergson, with an indubitable fidelity to empirical fact, pointed out that, in spite of our difficulties in grasping it through essences alone, the whole world of nature is in a constant and continuous flux.

These two leaders were later followed by a great number of further rebels, calling attention to further aspects of existence, apparently opaque to the universal, necessary essences of reason. Finally, natural science itself was forced by factual evidence to abandon the great, deterministic system of Newtonian Physics. Nature seems not to be ruled exclusively by fixed, determinate causes. Its laws hold only for the most part, and not without exceptions. They do not express necessary sequences, but only statistical averages. This was the *coup de grâce*.

At the present time, the cumulative weight of this criticism is vigorously expressed by many movements of thought such as positivism, scientific empiricism, pragmatism, etc., all of which share a profound scepticism concerning the identification of existence with rational or noetic being. Whatever it may be, existence is something distinct from the concepts and sensations by which we are so apt to think we grasp it as it is without remainder. Many of these schools interpret the distinction as an inability of human reason to understand things as they really are, and attempt to devise non-rational substitutes for the rational faculty.

The most vigorous of these, however, the so-called existentialist movement, does not bother with any such compromise. It simply asserts the basic divorce between essence and existence (Cf. Paul Weiss, "Existenz and Hegel", *Phil. & Phen. Research*, Dec. 1947, pp. 206 ff.). Being is individual, ever-changing, contingent, and indeterminate. Hence it is radically opaque to the universal, changeless essences which fill our minds. Life is absurd and the greatest absurdity of all is the

obstinate attempt to find meaning in it. No meaning can be *found*. It may perhaps be *created* by man from the depths of his indeterminate being.

Existence is not determined by essence, but essence by existence. Man has neither a fixed nature nor a natural end. His end is simply to maintain his existential freedom. But after all, even existence is only another essence. For the more radical existentialists who take this final step, there is nothing left but the cultivation of nothingness (*das nichts*). The modern rebellion against post-Cartesian philosophy, or, as many of these rebels have supposed, against philosophy itself, clearly reaches its climax with this blunt raising of the problem of existence.

This problem probes to the first foundations of human thought, i.e., to metaphysics. It is most timely, therefore, that philosophical followers of the Thomistic tradition should turn to this problem, and attempt to deal with it in terms of the concepts and methods of *philosophia perennis*. In many papers of this volume, the problem is not merely classified and dealt with by the repetition of traditional formulae, but really faced and wrestled with. The results are often illuminating, and at the same time surprising to those who think of classical, realistic philosophy as a collection of rigid dogmas, rather than as a living way of thought.

The first paper on *Existence and Philosophy* by Professor Gilson (pp. 4-16), is a vigorous statement of the problem, and a masterful sketch of its historical background. Gilson begins by discussing the temptation of reductionism, to which so many philosophers have yielded in the course of Western thought. Being is confused with some mode of being that is readily conceptualized, and metaphysics is regarded merely as the extrapolation of some special science or scientific method. This attempt has failed again and again, with the blame being placed upon metaphysics rather than upon that failure of insight which confuses being itself with one of its modes. No matter what mode is chosen there are always *other* modes which resist reduction. Hence it has always bred passionate protests and defenses of existence, which cannot be fitted into such conceptual systems. This is the problem now confront-

ing us. "Philosophies without existence, existence without philosophy : such seem to be, in the final reckoning, the options to which we find ourselves condemned in the present day" (p. 8).

These philosophies are "essentialist" in the sense that they have reduced being to one limited type of essence. But there are other essentialist philosophies, those of Plato, Plotinus, and Scotus Eriugena for example, which have followed a different but no less mistaken course. They have recognized something *beyond* essence, of which all intelligible being is a manifestation. But this *being beyond being* leads to paradox and contradiction. The more we insist upon its transcendence, the more insidiously we find ourselves imagining it. That which cannot be grasped at all, which in no sense falls under the concept of being, must destroy any philosophy that is unwise enough to embrace it. The root fallacy of such transcendentalism is the identification of the intelligible with essence, and of essence with being. The remedy is to be found only in the insight that "essence and existence both enter into the structure of being" (p. 11).

This is the true *existential* philosophy. According to Gilson, Aristotle recognized that being includes something higher than essence, namely, *act*. But he identified this highest being with the life of thought, engaged in the self-contemplation of fixed, eternal essences. This leaves out the factors of novelty, power, creative fecundity, and freedom which are included within being itself, and also manifested in the finite universe. On Gilson's view, that disentanglement of the absolute act of existing from every essentialist limitation, which occurred in the Middle Ages, was a revolutionary insight whose significance has still been only partially fathomed. Every finite act of existing must be limited by some essence. But the act of existing includes a creative energy which is more than essence. It is something that can be observed and cognized, not something that can be conceptually defined and deduced.

A. C. Pegis' presidential address on *The Middle Ages and Philosophy* (pp. 16-25) is a timely and well-buttressed plea for the pursuit of philosophy as a living, advancing, dis-

cipline, rooted in the sound insights of the past, but ever struggling for further light. This conception is, I think, worthy of the serious attention of all philosophers at the present time, to whatever school or way of thought they may belong. We tend to oppose originality to past knowledge, philosophy to the history of philosophy. But the two are not really opposed, as is clear if we look at other scientific disciplines. What science has ever been advanced by a neglect of insights already achieved? The first responsibility of a philosopher is to discover those insights which are embedded in the so-called *history* of the subject.

But this means a complete abandonment of the uncritical detachment which has become associated with the term "history" today. As Pegis points out, the great philosophers have treated their predecessors "as living men, not as buried doctrines" (p. 24). Aquinas, for example, "never adopted an antiquarian attitude towards the history of philosophy." He never merely *reported* the ideas of the past, but came to grips with them critically, giving what he found to be true, a worthy, intellectual existence within his own mind. Pegis then warns his contemporaries against the delusion that by repeating standard phrases and formulae they are preserving the truths of *philosophia perennis*. They are rather killing it. "... We sometimes write as though by the mere act of filling our books with quotations from St. Thomas Aquinas, we are filling them with truth... But a reported Thomism is really dead..." (p. 24). These words deserve the attention not only of teachers in the Roman Catholic schools, but of all teachers of philosophy in those strangely bifurcated departments of our modern Colleges and Universities where philosophy is now so tragically separated from its history.

Pegis calls attention to another fact now commonly neglected. St. Thomas Aquinas was a theologian rather than a philosopher. Or course, as a theologian he had to make use of philosophy. The existential philosophy he formulated was strikingly original, and filled with new implications, as was clear to his contemporaries. But these implications were never developed in a strictly philosophical setting, according to purely rational ideals. In the modern period, philosophy came



to its maturity, in the sense that it was pursued for its own sake, and freed from theological subordination. But unfortunately, during the time of transition, the metaphysics of existence was first watered down by the Nominalists, and then lost altogether by the Cartesians.

Philosophy was thus given over to a deontological exploration of sense experience and ideas. In such an atmosphere, modern scholasticism has been able to do little more than to preserve the germs, often in a very distorted form, of an existential discipline which has never been clearly focused or developed in its own right. The recent collapse of the new, thought-centered philosophy, and the radical challenge of anti-rationalism now provide a most favorable opportunity for the elaboration of the basic, existential implications of scholastic thought.

The remaining papers and discussions of this volume are primarily directed to this end. The problem, of course, has a logical and epistemological phase, as well as a metaphysical one. Each of these phases receives considerable attention. What is existence, and how is it known? Here and there one gets the impression of ancient formulae being glibly recited. But on the whole, there is a real grappling with the problems through clear and living speech.

Neither question is fully dealt with. No final solution is offered. Many divergent approaches are followed, sometimes leading to conclusions which are inconsistent. But one cannot read this volume carefully and critically, without feeling that a genuine advance has been made, and without being stimulated to serious reflection on the many suggestions offered. In the remainder of this review, I shall refer the reader to those suggestions which seem to me most fertile, and offer a few critical comments.

The metaphysical question is dealt with primarily in three papers. Ernest Kilzer, writing on *The Modes of Existence* (pp. 66-77), considers certain confusions which now attach to the term *analogy*. According to him, the most basic of these is the idea that the doctrine of analogy is the answer to a metaphysical rather than to a logical question. This is suggested by the widespread use of the current expression "analogy of

being" (p. 70). As a matter of fact, analogy is a logical, not a metaphysical term, referring not to being, but rather to our abstract knowledge of it. Being itself is neither abstract nor analogous.

If we ask what analogy implies in the metaphysical order of finite beings, the answer is the real distinction, in any finite entity, between its essence and its existence. It is through this distinction alone that the apparent contradiction involved in asserting that this entity is different from that entity, and yet both of them are, can be avoided. In so far as this actually is, or participates in the act of existence, it is akin to every other existing entity, and is opposed only to nothingness. But in so far as it is *this*, not *that*, it is distinct from all other realities, and limited to its own measure of being.

The principle of limitation or restriction is *essence*. It is a capacity to receive the act of being in a certain way. The finite act of existing is the fulfillment or completion of this potency or imperfection of the essence. Every finite being must include this composition within it. Otherwise, it would either lack existence, and not be at all, or it would lack essence. In this case, it would either lose even the capacity to be, or, lacking all limitation, would become the pure act of being itself.

These two principles are correlative and inseparable. Essence is the capacity to be within certain limits. Finite being is always the activation of a certain essence. Each essence, if it exists, has a limited mode of existence, corresponding to its limits. The limited essence can be clearly understood by the human intellect, and expressed in a definition. Existence cannot be so conceptualized. We cannot define the pure act of existing. Nevertheless we can grasp existence, in relation to some finite essence it perfects. We can also discern a similarity of proportion between the different existences and their corresponding essences.

This enables us to forge an analogous concept of being in general, under which every entity, even pure existence itself, may be confusedly included, though pure existence lacks any such complexity (p. 70). How then is it embraced under the analogous concept? This point is not explained by Kilzer,

nor by any of the other papers dealing with the subject of analogy.

Fr. Henri Renard in his paper on *Essence and Existence* (pp. 53-66), brings out the connection between this composite structure of finite being, and the philosophical law of causality. Limitation implies a participation in being, and this participation implies a dependence upon the unparticipated. It is, therefore, the distinction between essence and existence that leads to the most basic argument for the existence of pure act.

Essence is indifferent to existence, which does not fall within the definition of anything we know directly. Hence when we find, by sense experience, that such an essence actually exists, we may conclude that there is some external cause, giving it the existence which it could not provide of itself. This distinction also lies at the root of all dynamism, for "action is the search after a perfection which is lacking" (p. 59).

Fr. Renard, of course, does not mean to deny the action of perfect being, to which he refers on the very next page (p. 60). But the apparent contradiction needs to be explained. Is it not the act of *existing* which lies at the root of all dynamism? In its pure act, it can overflow in the form of free, creative energy. As the act of a finite essence, it can diminish this imperfection by the first act of existence, and then by that activity, which is a continuation and efflorescence of this first act.

The dynamic aspect of existence, as over against static essence, is described with great lucidity by Fr. Phelan in his treatment of *The Existentialism of St. Thomas* (pp. 25-40). The act of being is not the static object of any definition. It is not a state, but an act, much better conveyed by a verbal form, such as the Latin *esse*, to be, than by the abstract, English noun, existence. "*Esse* is dynamic impulse, energy, act... In all things on earth, the act of being is the consubstantial urge of nature, a restless, striving force, carrying each being onward from within the depths of its own reality to its full self-achievement" (p. 35).

The act of existing includes the first act by which a possibility achieves its actuality, emerges from its causes, and

attains an incommunicable, private existence of its own. In spite of some of the Thomistic commentators, this is not all. It also includes the *operation* of an entity, its tendency to a consubstantial end, and its repose in this end. *Eiusdem rationis tendere in finem, et in fine quodammodo quiescere...* Haec autem duo inveniuntur competere ipsi esse (*De Veritate*, XXI, 2). This crucially important, dynamic aspect of Thomistic existentialism is often lost sight of...

As Fr. Phelan suggests, when properly focused, it offers a means of fitting most of the supposedly antirational insights of modern existentialism into the framework of classical metaphysics. One need not reject human reason in order to recognize the restless dynamism of finite being, and the incommunicable singularity which it retains to the very end. Even the contingency of concrete existence can be seen to follow without undue strain from this classical existentialism.

The changeless essence of a finite entity can be grasped by reason. This necessary principle of limitation can be conceptualized and defined. But it remains only a possibility, for no essence demands existence. Hence the most elaborate, rational analyses, and the most rigorous, deductive conclusions all have an *if* in front of them. *If* there is to be a man, then we can say *what* such an entity must be. But with the existentialists, we must still ask why such a being should *exist*, or, indeed, why any finite entity at all should *exist*.

No abstract essence can cause existence. But what is to prevent existence itself from causing existents? It does not have to do so necessarily. But why may it not *freely* bring them into existence? Why may it not communicate to them both that necessary limitation which makes each of them *what it is*, and that act of existing which makes it *to be*. (p. 32).

In this revealing paper, Fr. Phelan makes such suggestions concerning the *general*, existentialist implications of classical metaphysics, but he does not go into further detail. It would be interesting to see how many of the more specific views of recent existentialist thought concerning freedom and the moral life of man, could be fitted into a realistic anthropology. Such studies are greatly needed, but not attempted in this volume.

The papers on logic and epistemology are more original than those on metaphysics. J. F. Anderson gives a very clear account of *The Analogical Concept* (pp. 106-110), and sharply distinguishes it from univocal concepts, which have become the exclusive concern of modern logic. A univocal concept *completely* abstracts from its inferiors. Thus the concept *animal* abstracts from both man and brute. It includes these not actually but only potentially. An analogical concept, on the other hand, does not abstract in this way from its inferiors, but actually includes them. Thus the concept *being*, if it were univocal, as Hegel and others have supposed, would completely abstract from all its differences, and would coincide with *nothing*. As a matter of fact, as Aristotle first pointed out (*Meta.* 998B22 ff.), it actually includes these, and cannot be given a meaning apart from them.

But in the second place, though it actually includes all its inferiors, it includes them not distinctly and explicitly, but only in an undifferentiated unity, as a great multitude of people, seen at a distance, is seen as one, though it is actually and not potentially many. Thus the concept of being represents all things as having being. But in this case, the unity of being is real, for all things, in spite of their differences, have a minimal similarity of proportion. The analogous concept does not apply to any one of its analogates rather than to another, but to all of them indifferently and indistinctly.

The modes of being, which are the object of metaphysical knowledge, are too broad in range to be brought under the scope of any abstract, univocal concept. Hence the exclusive concern of modern logic with univocal concepts, or essences, has made metaphysics appear to be equivocal, and, therefore, impossible. As a matter of fact, analogical concepts play a most important role in common thought.

Unless we possessed such a means of grasping being in this vague way, we should not be aware, as we certainly are, of the partiality which attaches to our clear and distinct ideas. Such univocal concepts signify the generic or specific essences of things. Analogical concepts are non-quidditative. They do not signify essences, but modes of being. Without them, metaphysics is impossible.

The two most interesting contributions in the field of logic concern *the second act of the mind*, or *judgment*, and especially the function of *the copula*. Modern logic has emphasized the compounding or dividing function of the copula, but has almost completely neglected its existential function. As a result, the judgment has come to be regarded as a sort of complex term, or as Professor C. I. Lewis says in a recent work, we may think of "propositions as a certain kind of terms" (*Knowledge and Valuation*, p. 46). The proposition is thus regarded as a complex essence, entirely indifferent to existence.

Underlying this view, of course, is the essentialist assumption that being is to be exhaustively identified with intelligible essence. Professor Lewis recognizes the distinction between actual and possible existence, but he does not realize that *the act of existing*, as distinct from the intelligible essence of existence, can be expressed only by a proposition. According to him, a single term *comprehends* "all possible or consistently thinkable things to which the term would be correctly applicable," whereas it *denotes* "all actual things to which the term applies" (*op. cit.*, p. 39).

This is simply false. No single term can *denote* a concrete actuality. It can only *comprehend*, in Professor Lewis' sense. Thus in order to illustrate what he calls the denotation of a *term* (p. 39), he refers not to a term but to a term in a proposition, — something *very different*. The term *man*, for example, alone by itself, signifies an abstract essence, which is entirely indifferent to actual existence. It also signifies, or *denotes* in the classical sense *all possible* entities of which this essence *could be* predicated.

But its meaning would not be changed in the slightest degree, if no men *actually existed*. Hence no single term is true or false. Only the proposition can "denote," in Professor Lewis' sense. Hence it alone is true or false. The modern confusion of proposition with term arises from a neglect of the metaphysical distinction between essence and existence, and a consequent neglect of the *existential* function of the copula. As a result, the proposition which expresses *some mode of existence* is confused with the term which merely signifies a possible essence.



It is regrettable that the two papers of Wade and Henle in this volume do not refer to the essentialist doctrines of recent logic. Neither do they consider the relation of their existential interpretation of the judgment to the traditional theory of analogy, a point which cries out for discussion. But they analyze certain very important and relevant implications of the classical theory of the judgment, with great originality and clarity.

This realistic theory is irreconcilable with the essentialist doctrines of modern logic which would view the proposition as a mere complex term, assertible of reality as a possible "state of affairs." The judgment asserts not a static "state" of affairs, but an act of existing. "Mary baking pies" is neither a proposition, nor the content of a proposition. (Cf. *Knowledge and Valuation*, p. 49 ff.) It is a mere complex of essences, indifferent to existence.

"Mary is baking pies," when actually asserted, is more than a mere complex of essences. It is: 1) a union of essences; 2) in an act of existing, not conceptualizable; but 3) directly cognized and assented to by a vital act of the mind. It is only in this second act of the mind that the act of existence which is not an essence, can be expressed. This second act cannot be reduced to the first.

Wade, in his article on *The Judgment of Existence* (pp. 102-106), brings out this point in a brilliant discussion of the distinction between an *attributive judgment*, such as *all men are mortal*, and the *judgment of existence*, such as *man is*. The attributive judgment does not say *that* the subject exists, but only *how* the subject exists. *All men are mortal* does not mean *all mortal men exist*. It means that men, when they exist, are mortal. Here the act of existing signified can be either possible or actual. But when I say *man is*, I mean that the subject actually exists in *rerum natura*, and exclude mere possibility.

Present-day logicians would tend to reduce this type of judgment to an attribution. They would say that *man is* means the same as *man is a being*. But this is false, for every being does not actually exist. Hence *man is a being* could signify either the actual existence or the possible existence of man. *Man is* can signify only that man actually exists in *rerum natu-*

ra. The difference arises from the substitution of a concept (*a being*) for the act of being (*is*).

These points are intimately related to the medieval concept of *suppositio*. It is to be hoped that more attention will be paid to this important concept, and that discussions of the existential import of propositions in general will be brought into more intimate relation with the essentialist doctrines of modern, mathematical logic.

The last, and briefer sections of the volume on social and political philosophy are of less contemporary interest than the sections on which we have commented. Most of the articles have a distinctly historical or theological tone, and those which touch upon practical problems in a philosophical way, restrict themselves to vague generalizations and hesitant suggestions.

It is regrettable that the light of *philosophia perennis* cannot be made to bear more directly on moral and social problems. But the chief energies of Roman Catholic thinkers seem at present to be directed primarily to theoretical problems. Here their thought is eminently flexible, and worthy of the most serious attention of all students of logic and metaphysics.

Perhaps when these fields are thoroughly vitalized, they may be able to turn their attention to the as yet neglected task of working out an autonomous, realistic, *moral* philosophy, and of applying it to the burning questions of our time.

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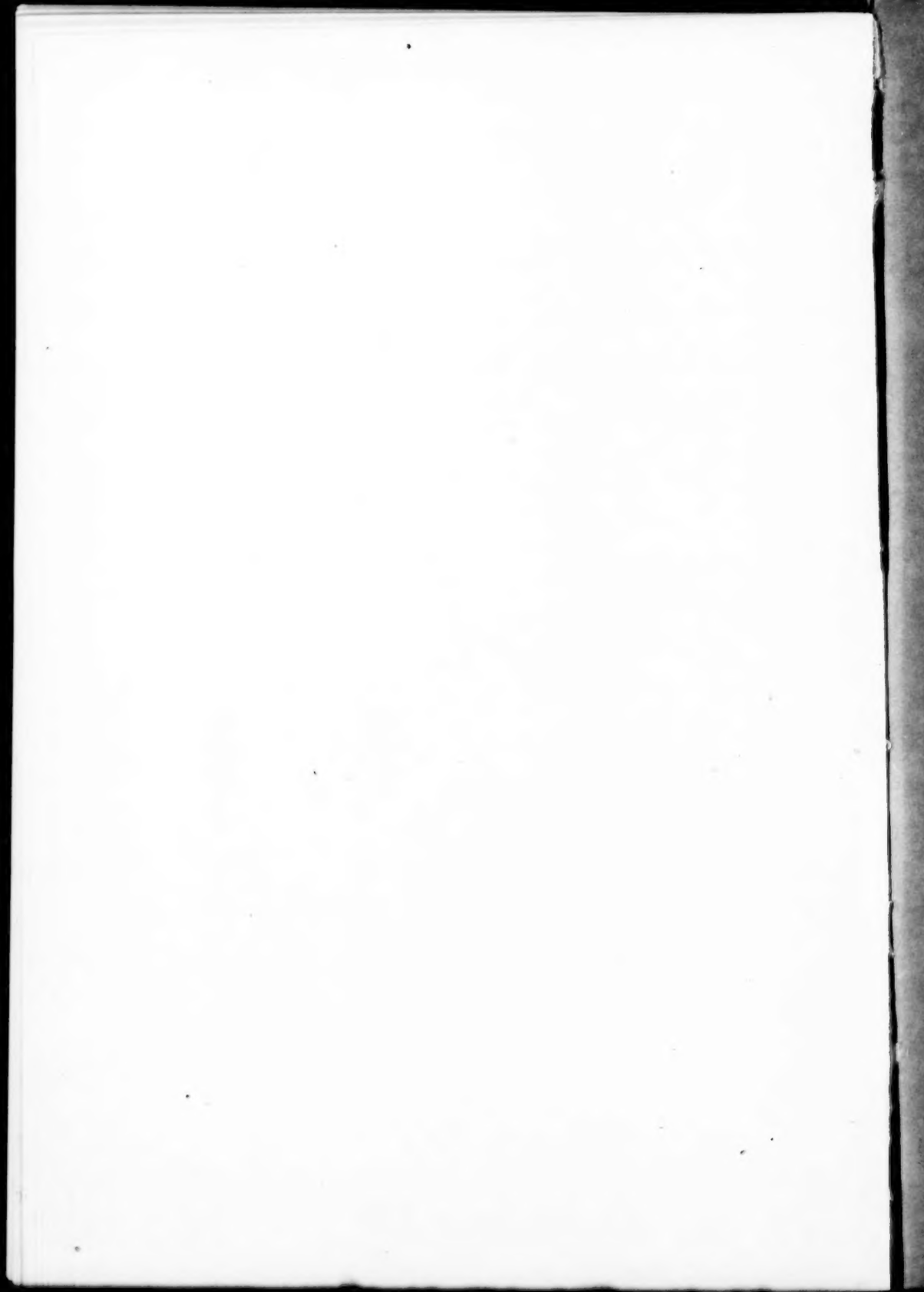
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